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**SIR EDWARD CARSON  
AND THE ULSTER MOVEMENT**

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# SIR EDWARD CARSON

AND

## THE ULSTER MOVEMENT

BY

ST. JOHN G. ERVINE

NEW YORK

DODD, MEAD AND COMPANY

1916



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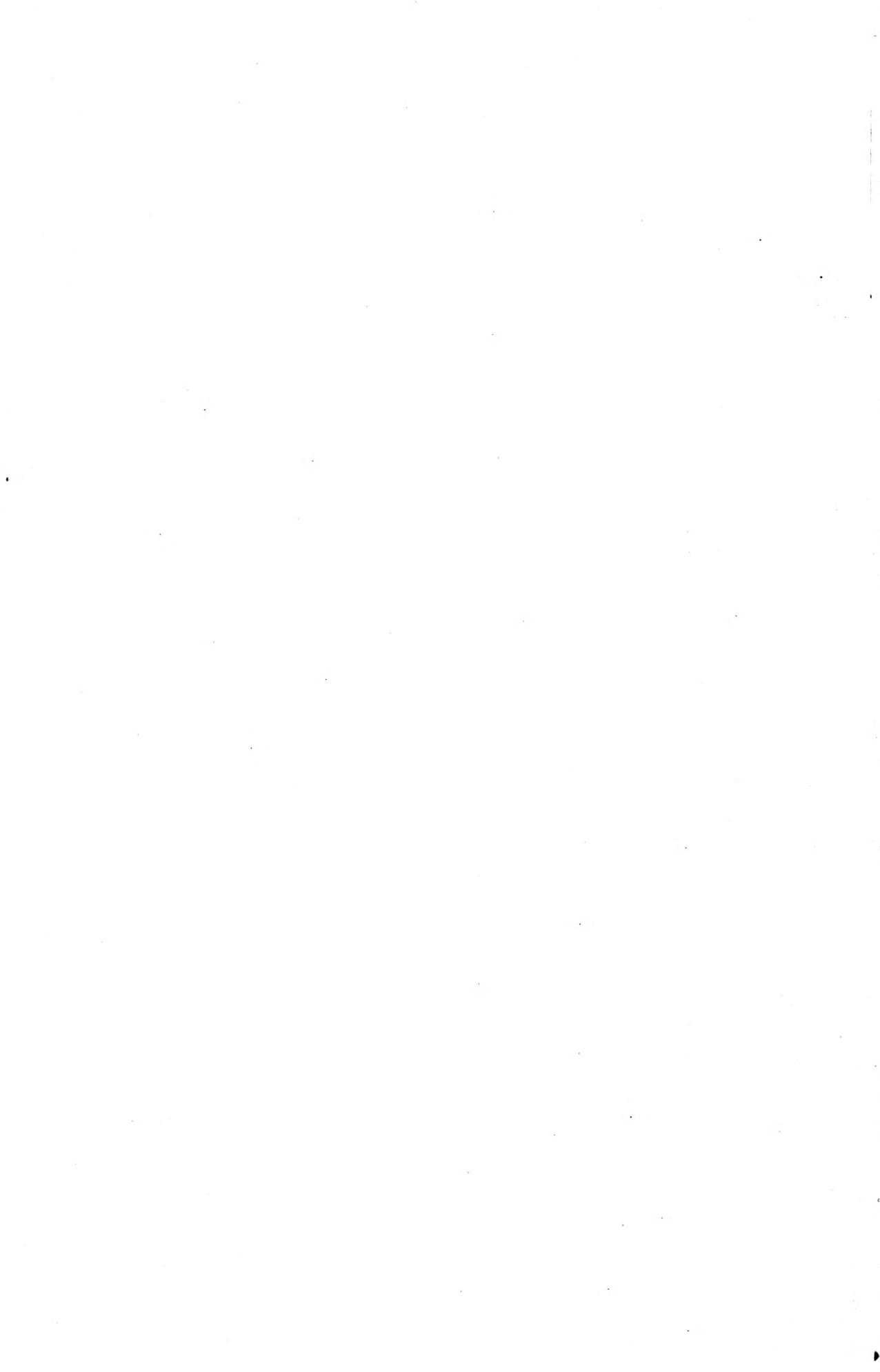
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## FOREWORD

ONE day, soon after I had accepted the commission to write this book, I met a friend who is the assistant editor of an important Conservative weekly review and, although he is a journalist, a distinguished man of letters. I told him that I was about to write a book on Sir Edward Carson, and he gaped at me for a few moments in astonishment. Then he said "Good God!" and walked away. I met him again, shortly afterwards, and he asked me if I had been serious when I said that I had agreed to write this book. I assured him that I had been quite serious, and he replied, "I would rather write a book on tombstones than a book on Carson!"

I found similar astonishment and contempt in every person to whom I spoke of my intention. At first, my friends, Conservatives, Liberals, Socialists and persons to whom politicians are utterly damnable, were incredulous. "What," they demanded, "has this Carson done that a book should be written about him? How do you propose to fill a volume on him? . . ."

They led me to a Reference Library and

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compelled me to read Sir Edward's record in "Who's Who."

"Look at it!" they said, pointing to the meagre statement of the man's meagre life and achievements, and I looked at it. "It isn't much of a life, is it?" they added.

"He has been a successful lawyer," I replied, looking for the silver lining which is said to be in every cloud.

"You might as well write a book about a successful haberdasher!" they answered.

"And then there is Ulster," I pleaded.

"Ulster be damned!" they said.

I closed "Who's Who," and returned it to the shelf whereon such books lie. "Oh, no," I retorted as I did so, "Ulster won't be damned. Ulster is of very great importance to Ireland."

This book, then, bears the title of "Sir Edward Carson," but the title is largely a misnomer, for the book will be about Ulster and the Ulster people and their relation to the rest of the Irish people; and so I offer no apology to the reader for writing it, though its title would seem to demand one.

**St. J. G. E.**

# SIR EDWARD CARSON AND THE ULSTER MOVEMENT

## CHAPTER I

### 1

ALL generalisations are false, even this one which I have just made, but none are so false as those which deal with races. They may, indeed, be said to be schoolmasters' dodges to avoid the fatigue of thought, the refuge in which the lazy man immures his brains so that he may not have to undergo the labour of discovering the truth. The tendency to generalise is a universal one, although the English people, with that curious modesty which sometimes afflicts an arrogant race, often imagine that it is only shown by themselves. Ibsen's plays are full of people who are, in every respect save that of physical geography, as insular in their ideas as the English are reputed to be. Dostoevsky, great artist though he was, had as much of the narrowness of vision as is possessed by the least intelligent member of the Primrose League: just as there is no

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place like England to the Primrose Leaguer, so there was no place like Russia to Dostoevsky, and as his Letters show he was singularly unhappy in any country but his own.

These generalisations about races and nations might not be of much consequence if they ended in their own fatuity ; but they become a grave peril to the comity of the world when they act as barriers between race and race, making suspicion, distrust, contempt, hatred and all uncharitableness. How much of the responsibility for the European Disaster of 1914 is due to the lazy man's generalisations about his neighbours in Europe cannot be calculated ; but undoubtedly some of it, perhaps a great deal of it, springs from that calamitous inertia. The Englishman who went about declaring that one of his countrymen, with one hand tied behind his back, could utterly destroy three foreigners, each with both hands free, may not have believed that statement to be literally true, but he certainly believed that it was approximately true. The falseness of the belief was revealed in the humiliations of the Boer War. The German who went about asserting that his Kultur was superior to every form of civilisation the world has known, may not, when brought to argument, have been prepared to assert that that claim was well founded in every respect,

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but he certainly believed that it contained a great deal of truth, more truth, perhaps, than any similar claim for any other culture. The falseness of that belief is, at the moment of writing, in process of exposure.

Few countries have suffered so terribly from loose generalisations as Ireland has, and few peoples have been so tragically misunderstood and misrepresented as the Irish people have been misunderstood and misrepresented by the English people. Englishmen, indeed, take a miserable pride in asserting that they do not understand Irishmen. Their inability to understand my countrymen has not prevented them from attempting to govern them ; for the boys of the bulldog breed, if they cannot solve a problem, can always sit on it. There is, however, no real inability on the part of the Englishman to understand the Irishman : there is only that laziness in knowing to which I have already made reference. When a man has learned to understand himself he has learned to understand all men. That, however, is an understanding at which most men refuse to arrive, and so it happens that the world is governed on the plan of tragical ignorance and calamitous generalisations. There are two facts about men which probably contain all the truth about them : one is that all men are alike ; the other is that all men are different. It is

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the confusion of these two facts which creates discord ; for men, ignorant of or indifferent to truth, insist on seeing resemblances where there are differences, and differences where there are close affinities.

### 2

All men are alike, fashioned according to type, "made," as the Bible has it, "in the image of God." They resemble each other in fundamentals ; they differ from each other in inessentials. The inessentials are of great importance, since they give colour and variety to human existence, but they are no more Life than the gargoyles on Notre Dame are the cathedral. If the English reader of this book is to understand the Irish people, he must know that every Irishman is different from all other men *in his decorative aspect*, but closely akin to all other men *in his essential aspect* : that is to say, he is very much like Englishmen, Frenchmen and Hottentots. Perhaps the most stupid of all the nonsense that was said and written during the last Home Rule controversy arose out of the talk about "the two nations in Ireland" : Catholic and Protestant. Talk of this kind is the sort of twaddle that is uttered by politicians and journalists and persons who have never

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seriously thought about anything in their lives for ten consecutive minutes. There are decorative differences between Ulstermen (a considerable number of whom are Catholics) and the rest of the inhabitants of Ireland, just as there are decorative differences between Lancashiremen and men of Kent; but these differences are immaterial and no greater than the differences between Munstermen and Leinstermen. The reader may urge that the religious difference is a material difference. He may say that there is a greater difference between the Belfastman and the Corkman than there is between the Manchesterman and the Tunbridge Wellsman, for the Englishmen are Protestants, whereas one of the Irishmen is a Catholic and one is a Protestant.

That argument is, I think, fallacious. There appears to me, who am a member of an Ulster Protestant family, as great a difference between a Manchester Dissenter and a Tunbridge Wells Anglican as there is between a Belfast Protestant and a Cork Catholic. There is certainly as much bitter feeling; in some instances, there is more. I believe that there is more amenity in a small Irish town or village between Catholics and Protestants than there is between members of the Church of England and Nonconformists in a town or village of similar size in England. I doubt whether

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Catholics and Protestants in Ireland, generally speaking, feel as antagonistic towards each other as Low Churchmen feel towards High Churchmen, or vice versa, in England. The Kikuyu controversy raged, not among Irishmen, but among Englishmen. The Bishop of Zanzibar who "excommunicated" the Bishop of Hereford for heretical conduct is not an Irish Catholic venting his indignation on an Irish Protestant: he is an Englishman, masquerading as a Catholic, venting his little anger on another Englishman. Nor, to put the argument in terms of politics, is the disagreement between Nationalists and Unionists in Ireland so profound as the disagreement between Liberals and Conservatives in England. Were it not for the question of Home Rule, many, the majority, of the Nationalists would proclaim themselves to be Tories, and many, the majority, of the Unionists would proclaim themselves to be Radicals. I shall make a more elaborate reference to this probability later in this book. My purpose now is to insist that in the end of all Ireland contains only Irishmen, that the Ulsterman is as fiercely in love with his mother Ireland as any man in Connacht or Leinster or Munster.

When the last Home Rule controversy was at its height, some born fool proposed that Ulster should be politically detached from

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the rest of Ireland and politically attached to Scotland or the Isle of Man or some such place. He might as well have proposed that it should be physically detached. I have never yet met any Ulsterman to whom this proposal did not sound like a proposal to commit a horrible act of outrage. It was made and supported by people who cannot rid their minds of the belief that Ulstermen are not Irishmen. These people speak of us as "Ulster Scots," a description which we strongly resent. It is as inept as I should be if I were to describe the fishermen in the Devonian village in which I am now living as "Devon Spaniards" because they have Spanish blood in their veins and are, some of them, less "typically" English-looking than any one, not a foreigner, can be. At the risk of being tedious and vainly repetitious, I wish to impress upon the mind of the English reader this fact, that Ulstermen are Irishmen; that they are proud of their Irishry; and that they dislike intensely any suggestion that they are aliens in a hostile land. It is important, too, that the English reader should know that Ulstermen have been as rebellious, more dangerously rebellious, against the English as the "Irish" have been. The history of Ireland is full of fine deeds done by Ulster Protestants for the freedom of the country; and the recollection of these deeds is an act of pride

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on the part of many of the most devoted adherents of the Orange Order. I remember very vividly being taken by my grandmother to a street in Belfast, called Corn Market, and told that that was the place where Henry Joy McCracken was hanged in 1798 for the part he took in the '98 Rebellion which was begun in Ulster by Presbyterians ; and I remember, too, the pride she had when she told me that ancestors of her own, stiff-lipped farmers in County Down, had had their share in shooting English soldiers in the eighteenth century, and were hanged for their pains.

The decorative difference between an Ulsterman and a Munsterman, Northman and Southman, is no greater than the decorative difference between a Connachtman and a Leinsterman (Westman and Eastman). I have heard a Catholic in Meath speak as bitterly against Catholics in Cork as an Englishman will sometimes speak against a Welshman. I have heard people in Mayo, living on the borders of Galway, speak of the people of Connemara as if they were natives of the Nicobar Islands, although the distance between their homes is no greater than the distance between Charing Cross and Croydon. The first of the many illusions held about Ireland by English people which must be dispelled is that there are two nations in Ireland : one, the minority, resident in

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Ulster and composed of Protestants, all of whom are thrifty, industrious, sober, honest, intelligent, brave and highly enlightened ; the other, the majority, resident in the remaining provinces and composed of Catholics, all of whom are spendthrift, lazy, drunken, corrupt, ignorant, often cowardly and invariably superstitious. In Ulster itself, nearly half of the population is Catholic, possessed of all the characteristic virtues and vices of the "typical" Ulster Protestant, differing only from him in the expression of their belief in God.

There are not two Irelands and two kinds of Irishmen : there are four millions of Irish, men, women and children, each of them varying from all the others, but all of them closely akin in their needs, and there is only one Ireland, whole and indivisible, a nation knit, as all nations are, out of the incalculable dissimilarities and resemblances of its people into an imperishable unity.

### 3

Politicians rule a country in bursts of emotion : statesmen govern in the sweat of their brains. Ireland has her statesmen (Sir Horace Plunkett is one of them) just as England has ; but, as in England, so it is in Ireland : the politician, the journalist,

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the fluffy-minded man are familiar to everyone, whereas the statesman is known only to a few. Journalists and politicians have made and spread the false generalisations that antagonise men and obscure the truth. The Unionist journalists and politicians spend their days in describing Ulster as a place inhabited mainly by archangels : the exceptions to the archangelic characters are, of course, the Catholics and Nationalists whose diabolical nature is too terrible to be calmly contemplated. The rest of Ireland, save for the saving grace of isolated Unionists, is peopled by persons whose dispositions are of a kind that cannot be discussed in polite circles. The favourite description is "cattle-drivers." The reader of Unionist journals might easily imagine, from the tone of the references to "cattle-driving," that Irish Nationalists take an inhuman delight in torturing cows simply for the sake of torturing them. It is a fact that thousands of "men in the street" in England literally do not know that "cattle-driving" is the Irish agricultural equivalent of strikes, that it is the means employed by the workless farm labourer to express his discontent at the conversion of tilled lands into grasslands. The "cattle-drivers" may or may not be cruel to the beasts they drive. It is probable that some of them are, and it is equally probable that some of them are not. The

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practice is reprehensible, but it is not any more reprehensible than the acts of sabotage and personal violence with which workmen in Belfast have from time to time conducted strikes. I am not here defending or denouncing strikes, though in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred I would say that the strikers are in the right : I am merely asking the reader to note that conduct which, in a Belfast workman, is described by Unionist journals as "industrial disorder" is, in agricultural labourers in Nationalist districts, described as "crime." The Unionist journals, moreover, always give their readers the impression that "cattle-driving" is conducted at the expense of Protestants, whereas it is mainly conducted at the expense of Catholics. The grievance of the workless labourer is not that the large grazier is a Protestant or a Catholic : it is that he is a large grazier and that fewer men are employed on grasslands and cattle ranches than are employed on lands under tillage.

I have chosen this instance of "cattle-driving" as an example of the method that is employed by politicians and journalists to misrepresent facts and distort truth. It is a method which is employed by Liberals and Nationalists with as much readiness as it is employed by Unionists. Hysterical journalists such as Mr. Arnold White, on

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the Tory side, and Mr. Harold Begbie, on the Liberal side, are examples of the kind of roaring jackass who is periodically let loose on the English press to the utter confusion of the English people. The appalling stuff which was written about the Kaiser and the German people by Mr. Arnold White in the early days of the European Disaster was on a par with the kind of stuff that was written about Sir Edward Grey and the English people by the more neurotic of the Prussian Professors. It was not any less senseless than the lunatic writing that was printed about Ireland by journalists on both sides at the height of the Home Rule controversy. Mr. Harold Begbie, who is what Mr. Rudyard Kipling might be if he were to join the Salvation Army, solemnly assured the readers of the London "Daily Chronicle" that little children never smile in Belfast! . . .

### 4

At this point, the English reader, whose mind is still "moidhered," as we say in Ulster, by the false generalisations of the politicians and the journalists, will say to himself, "I am prepared to admit that all the sober, industrious, energetic Irishmen are not confined within the boundaries of the 'north-east corner,' but surely it is

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broadly true to say that Ulster, and particularly Protestant Ulster, contains resourceful and industrious people, while the other provinces of Ireland contain easy-going and slack people. Look at the Board of Trade Returns and the statistics of Pauperism ! . . .” He may even hunt up newspaper cuttings showing that Belfast has a rate of pauperism which is about a third of that of Dublin and about half of the average rate of pauperism for the whole of the United Kingdom. He may say to himself, “These statistics prove that there are three times as many paupers in Dublin as there are in Belfast. Dublin is mainly Catholic and Nationalist, whereas Belfast is mainly Protestant and Unionist, therefore no Home Rule for Ireland ! ”

In the chapter which follows this one, I shall draw a picture of Ireland in contrast with England, and I will then deal very fully with this fact ; but I shall end this chapter by begging the reader to exercise his historic sense as well as his common sense. A certain pride in Belfast causes its inhabitants to speak and write of it as if it were the Delectable City ; but even the most bigoted Belfastman will admit that there are lazy, drunken, stupid and thriftless men in Belfast, and that there are men in Connacht whose industry and thrift are an affront to humanity. Enormous energy and

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enterprise are to be discovered in Belfast, and a Belfastman may, in most cases, be trusted to do his job as thoroughly as it can be done ; but equal energy and resource may be discovered in the rest of Ireland. The skill and enterprise shown in the making of the biggest and best boats in the world are equalled, on their own plane, by the skill and enterprise shown by the peasants on the western seaboard who have literally turned bare bog-land into cultivable farms with few resources beyond their fingers and the kelp they tore from the sea.

It is true that in the history of Ireland, the mass of the Irish people have had the appearance, the reality, even, of being lazy, dirty and thriftless ; but these appearances may be explained historically, and, as I shall show later, they are becoming less and less characteristic of the people. A disturbed nation, in which the overwhelming majority of the people have no certain tenure of the means of life, is inevitably a nation in which the people will display a carelessness of attitude towards existence. Any disturbed, insecure class is a shiftless class, and the condition of the Irish Catholic farmer in the days when land tenure in Ireland was a precarious thing was exactly analogous to the condition of the casual dock labourer in the Port of Liverpool or the Port of London. When thrift and industry are deliberately

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penalised, as they were in Ireland, it is natural that they should be replaced by recklessness and loafing. The English governing class in the first six months of the European Disaster discovered that in consenting to permit employers to utilise the services of dock labourers in a casual manner they were digging a pit for their own downfall ; for the men, demoralised by irregular employment in normal times, were in no mood for constant work when the war began. Statesmen have constantly urged Parliament to deal with the problem of the casual labourer. Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Webb have spent their lives, not merely in urging that such labours should be decasualised, but have actually devised a means whereby it may be done ; but it was not until the war came that the politicians could be persuaded to see in what direction they were letting the country drift ; and even then, it was not a politician, but a soldier, Lord Kitchener, who began the process of decasualising dock labour in Liverpool by means of a Dockers' Regiment.

British statesmanship did for the casual Irish farmer what British statesmanship ought long ago to have done for the casual dock labourer : it decasualised him ; it gave security of tenure to him ; it removed the penalties which formerly attached to energy and industry ; it put the farmer in

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a position to profit by his own industry. The Irish farmer's passion for land has survived persecution and the shiftlessness that often follows persecution. The effects of the long generations of disturbance and insecurity cannot be obliterated in a single generation, but they are in process of being obliterated ; and when I make my picture of Ireland in contrast with England, I hope to show (a) the distinguishing differences between England and Ireland ; (b) the change that has taken place in Ireland since the enactment of the Land Purchase Laws and the development of the Co-operative Movement ; and (c) the remarkable manner in which this change has begun to alter the general positions of the agricultural and the industrial populations in Ireland.

## CHAPTER II

### 1

IF the reader examines a map of England and Ireland, he instantly observes that a line may be drawn across the middle of England, dividing it in half, the halves being very dissimilar from each other. Even physically, this is true of England, but it is much more true, socially and politically and economically. The northern half of England is mainly industrial : the southern half is mainly agricultural ; the northern half contains a large population which is congregated into small areas : the southern half, excluding London, contains a small population distributed over wide areas. The lowest rates of pauperism in England are to be found in the northern half : the largest rates are to be found in the southern half. The people of the northern half of England are mainly Radical or Labour in politics : the people in the southern half are mainly Conservative in politics. If the reader takes the table of Poor Law Unions with the highest and the lowest rates of pauperism, published in the Majority Report of the Poor Law Commission, he will find that the

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districts with the highest rates return Conservative members to Parliament, whereas the districts with the lowest rates return Radical or Labour members.

Ireland cannot be divided in this fashion ; for Ireland is mainly an agricultural country. Its industrial areas are small and scattered in various parts of the island. The most striking difference between England and Ireland, however, apart from the differences of wealth and educational systems, is the remarkable difference in what I may call the incidence of politics. An industrial population is usually a Radical or Labour electorate, and an agricultural population is usually a Conservative electorate. That, broadly speaking, is the position of political affairs in England ; but it is not the position of political affairs in Ireland. The industrial population of Ulster (where the great bulk of the industrial population of Ireland resides) returns Conservatives to the House of Commons : the agricultural population of Ulster and of the rest of Ireland returns members who support the Liberal Party. This state of affairs may appear to the English reader to be part of the perversity of Irish conditions of life ; but the explanation of it is quite simple. The industrial population of Ireland is really a Radical, almost Republican, population, and the agricultural population is really a very

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Conservative population. Their attachment to their opposites is due solely to the fact that the farmer wants Home Rule, whereas the industrial worker wishes to maintain the Union. The farmer wants Home Rule because he is an Irishman : the industrial worker wishes to maintain the Union because he is profoundly afraid of the Roman Catholic Church. The fear of the Pope is the beginning and the end of the Belfast "man in the street's" objection to Home Rule.

There are no politics in Ireland : there are two religions. And this absence of real politics has led to many remarkable unities and many more remarkable separations. Ireland, indeed, is the land of false unities and false cleavages ; and the immediate effect of Home Rule will be the dispersal of incongruous groups and the assembling of new and more congenial groups. There is something ridiculous in the union in one party of such men as Parnell and Michael Davitt or Mr. John Redmond and Mr. Joseph Devlin or, to take a more remarkable instance, of Mr. William Murphy and Mr. James Larkin. Parnell, a man of Protestant and aristocratic origin, was a landlord : Davitt, the son of Catholic peasants, was a land nationaliser. Mr. Redmond is a Tory : Mr. Devlin is a Radical. Mr. William Murphy is a capitalist of a type that is almost obsolete in England :

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Mr. Larkin is a Syndicalist. With the living of these, but antagonistic to all of them, are Mr. William O'Brien, the elderly Ishmael, and Mr. Timothy Healy, the man with a tongue like a poisoned arrow. All these men are Nationalists. Similar disparities may be discovered among the Unionists : the unskilled labourer, earning 14s. or 16s. per week, in a linen mill in Belfast, and the millionaire mill-owner who sweats the life and brains out of him, vote alike, even when they are bitterly denouncing each other in the course of an industrial dispute.

Real politics are impossible in a country where men are so falsely united and so falsely separated. It has not hitherto been possible to get Irishmen to discuss real politics because of the general plea that nothing should be done or said to divide the ranks and thus imperil the Union or the chances of Home Rule ; and so, year after year, grave abuses and scandals have persisted and extended in Ireland until at last Belfast is known to be the city with the foulest sweating system in Europe, while Dublin is a by-word for the corruption of its municipal authorities and the vileness of its housing system. When the new Parliament meets on College Green after the declaration of peace, there will be a curious confusion. The electorate will probably return the men who now represent them in

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the Imperial Parliament to the Irish Parliament; but none of them will have any notion of why they are returning them or what they are to do when they are returned. The first task of the members and the Government will be, not to carry out a programme, but to discover one. And then will begin the desirable process of disintegration and new grouping. Mr. Redmond will discover fundamental differences between his view of things and Mr. Devlin's. Mr. Healy will enlarge his stores of venom and be as useless in Ireland as he is in England. Captain Craig will be utterly amazed to find that he and Mr. Redmond think alike. Allies will become enemies, and enemies will become allies. There will be bitter quarrels among former colleagues, and astonishing reconciliations between former foes. And while this process of disintegration and regrouping is being worked out among the politicians, a greater and more wonderful and more desirable process of disintegration will be worked out among the common men. The Nationalist workman in Dublin and the Orange workman in Belfast, when their minds are freed from the preoccupations of Home Rule, will begin to wonder what are the things they wish to see done by Parliament. Some wit has said that it will be difficult to tell who will be the more astonished on the morning after the

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establishment of Home Rule : the Nationalist who finds that he has to get up and go to work as usual or the Orangeman who finds that his throat has not been cut in the night. When the workmen have recovered from that astonishment, they will wonder why they ever acted separately, Orangemen in one camp, Catholics in another ; and when that process of speculation is set in motion, the onlookers may expect to see many strange things happening in Ireland.

### 2

In the first chapter of this book, I stated that industrial virtue is not confined to Ulster and that industrial vice is not confined to the remaining provinces. I ought to have added that prosperity is not confined to Ulster and poverty to Catholic Ireland. Belfast is favourably situated for the purposes of fortune, although her harbour is a poor one in comparison, say, with Galway, an impoverished and declining city. Belfast is near to the industrial areas and coal-fields of England and Scotland ; whereas Galway is remote from them. A great deal of the prosperity of Belfast is due to circumstances that were not created by Belfastmen, just as a great deal of the poverty of Galway is due to circumstances over which the Galway-

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men have no control. It was roughly true, thirty or forty years ago, to say that Ulster was the rich province of Ireland, and that Leinster, Munster and Connacht were the poor provinces : it is still largely true to say so. There was a more general diffusion of wealth and comfort throughout "the north-east corner" of Ireland than throughout the rest of the country. The workman in Belfast was, on the whole, better off than the farmer in Roscommon. That statement of affairs, however, is not so true now as it was before the passage of the various Land Purchase Laws and the development of the Co-operative Movement, and it is becoming less true every day. The aggregate wealth of Ulster is probably greater than the aggregate wealth of the rest of Ireland, but the individual wealth of the rest of Ireland is now almost certainly greater than the individual wealth of Ulster. At all events, it is in process of becoming so. The Irish farmer now owns, or will in course of time own, his farm ; the Belfast workman owns nothing but his physical energy. In the last resort, the farmer can maintain some sort of life on the produce of his farm, but in the last resort the Belfast workman cannot maintain himself at all, but must subsist on charity or on the Poor Law. There are a great many very rich men in Belfast, some of whom are millionaires, and there

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are hardly any very rich men in Munster and Connacht. But a wealthy city is not one in which there are many millionaires : that is a poor city. A wealthy city is one in which there is a high level of general well-being ; and in such a city there are no millionaires at all. The enactment of the Land Purchase Laws revolutionised Ireland ; and the end of that revolution has not yet been reached.

### **3**

The establishment of peasant proprietorship in Ireland was accompanied by the development of a very extraordinary, individual movement, now, of course, well known as the Irish Co-operative Movement. It is not my purpose in this book to tell the history of that movement. Sir Horace Plunkett has done so in "Ireland in the New Century," and so has my friend, Mr. George W. Russell ("Æ"), in a brilliant brochure called "Co-operation and Nationality." The Englishman who is eager to learn something of the Ireland that matters will not omit to read these two remarkable books. The story of Sir Horace Plunkett's persistence in propagating the principles of

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co-operation in Ireland reads almost like a saga. Here was a man of shy, hesitant manner, totally devoid of any gifts of speech, having none of the florid personality which appeals to the man in the street, unknown outside a limited circle of people and suspect to the majority of his countrymen because of his faith and his politics (he belonged to a Conservative and Protestant family), here was a man, handicapped by all these disabilities, who proposed to take a people made feckless by centuries of disturbance and persecution and turn them into a people of resource and substance and enterprise. It was an extraordinarily Utopian proposal, and as such it was treated by every person to whom Sir Horace spoke of it. No one encouraged him : everyone discouraged him. Some people said that the Irish were too suspicious of each other ever to co-operate. He was reminded of the political and religious difficulties. He was told that the Protestants and the Catholics would not work together, that the Orangemen and the Nationalists would break each other's crowns. The priests would be against him ; the Church of Ireland (the comical description given to themselves by the Episcopilians) would be against him ; the politicians would be against him ; the landlords would be against him ; and more important still, the people themselves would be against him.

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These and similar statements were made in every conceivable quarter.

The natural pessimism of the ordinary observers of Irish life was reinforced by the active antagonism of the politicians who declared that if Sir Horace were successful in achieving what he proposed to do (which they did not for one moment believe), then the agrarian interest in Home Rule would slacken, since Home Rule, to the farmer, meant not Irish nationalism so much as the right to own his own farm and lead a fairly comfortable life. The opposition of the Nationalist members of Parliament has persisted to this day. To this opposition I will make further reference in another chapter.

Sir Horace Plunkett was not discouraged. Opposition and gloomy prophecies seemed to stir him to greater energies. He spent his days and nights in travelling, wet or fine, from one small town or village to another in remote, difficult districts, making explanatory speeches to ill-informed and distrustful farmers, many of whom only listened to him under the duress of the parish priest. (The priests, it may be added, were on the whole the best friends Sir Horace could find in those days.) He enlisted the services of Mr. George W. Russell and Father Tom Finlay and Mr. Robert A. Anderson. He set their minds

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afire with the flame of his own enthusiasm, and compelled them to work for the movement as unsparingly as he himself worked for it. There is something almost fabulous in the story of this tongue-tied man inspiring so fiery a prophet as Mr. George Russell ("Æ"), tearing him from the company of fairies and leprechauns and heavenly hosts and poems and pictures and all mystical things, and setting him down in the midst of sullen, forbidding farmers to teach them how to combine for the good of themselves and their country.

### 4

George Russell is an unique figure. He is a poet and a painter and a mystic and the editor of an agricultural journal, *The Irish Homestead*, which contains the best journalism in Ireland and possibly in these islands. Its readers, attracted to it by the personality of its editor, include people who scarcely know the difference between a steam plough and a steam kettle. "Æ," of whom there is a powerful account in the second volume of Mr. George Moore's trilogy, "Hail and Farewell," writes of Irish agriculture and co-operation as an apostle might

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have written of the Christian religion. He maintains the interest of the least bucolic of his readers by the strength of his own interest, and he discourses on swine fever with something of the familiarity and ease with which he discourses of the Essential Inner Being. The only *poems*, if one excludes one by Mr. Thomas Hardy, which were printed in *The Times* during the European Disaster were written by "Æ." Like all men of generous nature, he possesses uncommon powers of invective, as the Dublin employers discovered in 1913 when they tried to starve their workpeople into submission to terms of labour which, as even *The Times* declared, were the most scandalous in Europe. One cannot adequately describe George Russell. He is a tremendous personality. You feel his presence before you see him. Force and power and great sanity of thought are extraordinarily blended in his nature. "Russell is a sort of Irish Chesterton," my friend, Mr. Bernard Shaw, once wrote to me, "kept sane by his contact with the Plunkett co-operative organisation and by the clearness of his Irish head." No one who has ever encountered him has ever failed to realise his greatness. He and Sir Horace Plunkett are great Irishmen, perhaps the greatest of all Irishmen.

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Their greatness may be measured by the fact that in twenty-two years the Irish Agricultural Organisation Society grew from nothing to a body controlling 924 different societies with an estimated annual turnover of £2,750,000. I have extracted an account of the activities of the I.A.O.S. and its affiliated bodies from "Æ's" book, "Co-operation and Nationality," in order that the reader may form a general opinion of the work that the Society is performing. "I am not going to give any minute description of the various kinds of rural associations promoted by the Irish Agricultural Organisation Society. Nearly everybody is by this time more or less familiar with the work of creameries, agricultural, poultry, flax, home industry, and credit societies. The dairy societies have released the farmer from the bondage of the butter merchant and proprietor, and given back to him the control of the processes of manufacture and sale. In the credit societies farmers join together, and, creating by their union a greater security than any of them could offer individually, they are able to get money to finance their farming operations at very low rates. The joint-stock banks lend money to these societies on wholesale terms, letting

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them retail it again among their members. Generally speaking, it has been found possible to borrow money at from three to four per cent. and to lend it for productive purposes at the popular rate of one penny a month for every pound employed. . . . The poultry societies collect the eggs of their members, they grade and pack them properly and market them through their own agencies. The flax societies erect or hire scutch mills, and see that the important work of scutching the flax is performed with the requisite care. The agricultural societies purchase seeds, implements, fertilisers, feeding stuffs, and agricultural requirements for their members. Many of them hold thousands of pounds' worth of machinery too expensive for the individual farmer to buy. The societies buy their requirements at wholesale prices and ensure good quality. The home industries' societies have made hopeful beginnings with lace, crochet, embroidery, and rug-making to provide work for country girls. About one hundred thousand Irish country people are already members of co-operative societies and their trade turnover this year (1912) will be close on three million pounds. The total trade turnover of the movement, from its inception to the present, is over twenty-five million pounds."

I make a new section here so that I may more clearly emphasise the importance of these two great concurrent movements in Ireland, the movement towards the establishment of peasant proprietorship and the movement towards the establishment of co-operative enterprise; and I beg the reader to remember, in considering the future of Ireland, that the I.A.O.S. is not yet thirty years old, that many of its efforts are still in the experimental stage, that it still has a vast number of handicaps to bear and, finally, that there is a very powerful opposition to it, engineered by gombeen-men\* and publicans, and greatly assisted by the policy of Mr. T. W. Russell, the chameleon of politics. If the reader will remember the extraordinary growth of the I.A.O.S. and the wide change made in Irish agricultural affairs by the Land Purchase Acts, he will see that another twenty-five years of develop-

\* A gombeen-man is a middleman who has turned himself into a kind of moneylender. He gives long credit to the farmers on condition that they sell their produce to him (at prices which he fixes) and buy all their goods from him (also at prices which he fixes). The social injury which such men can do is obvious. In England something of the equivalent of the gombeen man is to be found in the dealers who buy catches from fishermen. Mr. Stephen Reynolds makes many references to these people in his admirable books on Devonshire fishermen, "A Poor Man's House," "Seems So," and "How 'Twas."

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ment will mean a remarkably prosperous agricultural Ireland. It may even be that the poverty of the towns may be intensified at the time that the enrichment of the rural areas is growing ; for the European Disaster of 1914 brought much wealth to farmers and much suffering to the urban working-classes. The linen mills in Belfast, like the cotton mills in Lancashire, were terribly hurt by the war. If the reader will add the exceptional suffering caused by the Disaster to the normal suffering caused by the chaos of the industrial system, and will remember that Belfast has a deplorable record as a centre of sweated industries, it will not be difficult for him to understand that life in Ireland, on the whole, is a happier and more prosperous one for the peasant (generally speaking, a Catholic) than it is for the workman (generally speaking, a Protestant).

There is, then, a strange and wonderful renascence in Ireland, a quickening of old bones with new life, a great, outspreading development which will culminate one day in an Ireland which is as prosperous and developed as is Denmark now. In every nation there is a smother of activities that seem aimless and confused to the careless

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beholder, but somewhere in the midst of them, clear-eyed, cool-brained workers are guiding the chaos towards coherence. In little country towns and remote villages in Ireland there are young men, inspired by Sir Horace Plunkett and "Æ," who are formulating a synthesis of Irish life. They are few in number now and, for many reasons, not fully articulate, but they will grow in strength and power. They have done with old angers and ancient rages and the bitter wrangling of semi-dotards, nor have they any interest in internecine quarrels, the differences between Catholic and Protestant, Orangeman and Ancient Hibernian. They are bored by "the sorrows of Ireland"; they do not desire ever again to hear of the horrors of the Great Famine or of any famine, for they are resolved that, so far as is humanly possible, Ireland shall know no more famine. They are tired to death of rhetoricians such as Mr. John Redmond; they are sick of oratory and Irish-Americans and Curse-the-Pope-put-your-fut-in-his-belly Orangemen; and above all they are tired of Ireland in the part of Lazarus whining for crumbs from England's table. Here and there, these Young Irishmen discover in the old ascendancy a man from whom they can hope for some help: Lord Dunraven, Lord Fingall, Lord Monteagle; and perhaps Lord Ashbourne, though their interest in him is

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archaic rather than sociological ; but, while they are glad to have the encouragement and help of these men, they are resolved that they shall enter into the heritage of freemen by their own exertions. A mollycoddled Ireland, to them, is an abomination ; but an Ireland which has risen in agony and bloody sweat to the realisation of a great destiny is to them a beautiful land, commanding and receiving all their services. "Nature," wrote "Æ," "has no intention of allowing her divine brood, made in the image of Deity, to dwindle away into a crew of little, feeble, feverish city folk. She has other and more grandiose futures before humanity if ancient prophecy and our deepest, most spiritual intuitions have any truth in them." The Young Irishmen intend to let Nature have her way.

## CHAPTER III

### 1

AND now, I hear the impatient reader saying, what about Sir Edward Carson ? You have written a great deal of strange stuff about Sir Horace Plunkett and a fellow called Russell, whose name is totally unknown to me, but you have not made any reference to Sir Edward Carson, "our great leader" as the more emotional of the Unionists describe him. You have mentioned Land Purchase Acts and Co-operation and have written a very florid panegyric of a group of youths whom you name the Young Irishmen ; but you have not written one word about the man whose name is the title of your book. You have described a great ferment of ideas in Ireland, the creation of a new synthesis, a shedding of old, unhappy, far-off things and a reclothing in something fine and new. Very sketchily you have shown that there is a great revolution proceeding in Ireland of which very few people in England have any knowledge, and I, your ignorant and impatient reader, am prepared to believe that this revolution may change your country from an

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incoherent, unorganised, poverty-stricken nation into one which is united and planned and prosperous ; and I am prepared to concede considerable credit to Sir Horace Plunkett and that other fellow “Æ,” or whatever his name may be, for the part they have taken in the revolution ; but, after all, Sir Horace Plunkett is only Sir Horace Plunkett, a name unknown to the multitude, whereas the name of Sir Edward Carson is “as familiar in our mouths as household words.” What part did he take in the revolution ? What has he done to make Ireland a prosperous country ? . . .

2

Nothing, dear impatient reader, absolutely nothing.

3

The Right Honourable Sir Edward Henry Carson, Privy Councillor, Master of Arts of Trinity College, Dublin, LL.D. (Hon. Causa), Member of Parliament and King’s Counsellor, the leader of the Ulster Unionist Movement and the starry hero of all the politest young ladies of Belfast, has not done anything to promote the well-being of Ireland, never has done anything and never will.

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“But,” the English reader splutters in astonishment, “the man must have done something! Surely to Heaven the Ulster people, whose sanity and resource have always been notable, did not deliberately seek out a man without quality and choose him to be their leader!” You must let me tell the story in my own way, my reader, but for your impatience I will tell you at once that that is precisely what the Ulster people did; and they did it, not because they had suddenly been bereft of their sanity and resource, but because they were in a mood of rather keener sanity and resource than usual.

One of the favourite dicta of the modern Irish writers is that the stage Irishman has no relation to Irish life. The rather ape-like creature, clad in kneebreeches and a tailed-coat, and carrying a shillelagh in his hand, who is so familiar to the readers of *Punch* and the patrons of the music-hall and the melodrama theatres, has no existence in Ireland, the modern writers say, and never

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had any existence there. It is fashionable in Dublin to sneer at the novels of Charles Lever and Samuel Lover and the melodramas of Dion Boucicault because they were full of such people. I do not agree with my brothers on this subject. It is true that you do not see Irishmen in kneebreeches and tailed-coats to-day. It is true that Irishmen do not twirl shillelaghs over their heads and dare one and all to tread on the tail of their coats. (Some of them do not even know how to pronounce the word "shillelagh.") It is true, too, that Irishmen do not now address one as "a broth of a boy" nor bid the passer-by "the top of the morning," nor do any of the things which many Englishmen firmly believe they do. But there must have been Irishmen who did these things at some period of Irish history, and the proof of this statement lies in the fact that it is actually possible to discover stage Irishmen in real life to-day.

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### 6

Sir Edward Carson is a stage Irishman. So is Lord Charles Beresford. So is Mr. J. G. Swift MacNeill. (All of these gentlemen are Irish Protestants and, with the exception of Mr. MacNeill, Unionists.) Sir Edward Carson is the last of the Broths of a Boy. He has a touch of Samuel Lover's "Handy Andy" in him. He is the most notable of the small band of Bedadderers and Bejabberers left in the world ; the final Comic Irishman, leaping on to the music-hall stage or the political platform, twirling a blackthorn stick and shouting at the top of a thick, broguey voice (carefully preserved and cultivated for the benefit of English audiences) : "Bedad, bejabers and begorra, is there e'er a man in all the town dare tread on the tail of my coat, bedad, bejabers and begorra !" No other Irishman speaks with so deliberate a brogue or says "What" so obviously "Phwat !" No one on earth is so clearly the "typical Irishman" (that is to say, the Irishman of the muddy imagination) as Sir Edward Carson is. Goo' Dole Charlie Beresford and Mr. Swift MacNeill have hardly sufficient flair to be described in the admiring way in which

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I have just described Sir Edward. They are minor Broths of Boys. They would probably be more noticeable if Sir Edward were not present. But undoubtedly they belong to the tribe. They, too, are Beddaderers and Bejabberers. Lord Charles Beresford, in a very dull, formless book of reminiscences, has described his passage down Park Lane on the back of a pig: which is precisely the sort of incident that Charles Lever might have described in "Charles O'Malley" or "Tom Burke of 'Ours,'" or "Harry Lorrequer," and is exactly the kind of incident that nine Englishmen out of ten imagine to be part of the common routine of Irish life.

It is impossible to think of Sir Horace Plunkett riding down Park Lane on the back of a pig: it is equally impossible to think of Lord Charles Beresford founding the Irish Agricultural Organisation Society. Lord Charles, in fact, has founded nothing but a reputation for flamboyant and rather fatuous oratory. He is the kind of man one might like to have for one's bachelor uncle, the sort of amiable, mechanically jocular old gentleman who in Early Victorian days was generally put up at wedding breakfasts to propose the health of the blushing bride and bridegroom, a feat which he always accomplished with sly references to olive branches and the like.

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Mr. Swift MacNeill is a Learned Bird. He has an immense store of footling knowledge, and is inordinately pleased with himself for descending from Dean Swift. His chief function in the House of Commons appears to be that of Yapper. When someone makes a disparaging remark about Ireland, Mr. MacNeill shouts out "Oh ! oh !! " with something of the passion with which one ejaculates when impaled upon a pin. And there his services to Ireland end. His reward will probably be the Speakership of the Irish Parliament.

Sir Edward Carson easily surpasses these gentlemen in his ability to fill the music-hall stage as the Comic Irishman. He plays the part extraordinarily well, almost convincing the innocent beholder that he is the real Irishman, all others being aliens. If the reader will think of the "features" of the stage Irishman, he will discover that Sir Edward has all of them. He is quick-tempered, impulsive, rash in his speech, devil-may-care in his manner (up to a point), obstinate and thoughtless. As the common phrase has it, "he speaks without thinking." \*

\* A friend who read this book in manuscript made this comment on my references to Sir Edward Carson : "I think you are a little hard on Carson . . . where you class him with Beresford and the Bedadders and Bejabberers. He is not an attractive personality, this Carson, but he has a kind of power and a character of his own, big in a way in *resistance* though not in creative statesmanship. He has, like Parnell, the Irishman's

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Now, the reader may demand, if you are right in all that you here assert, why did the sensible men of Ulster invite this Dublin playboy to lead them ? There is nothing in Sir Edward's character that in any way approximates to the common picture of the Ulster character. He is not even an Ulsterman, for he was born in Galway and his associations are mainly, so far as Ireland is

faculty of doing the unexpected. When driven into a corner the unimaginative Irishman will always go outside the convention, and Carson did, and he acted so far as I have read his speeches, with rather more dignity than Dillon. Miss —, who is a very shrewd critic, heard him—I never did—and said he was impressive in an uninspiring way, rather like a 'decayed Pharaoh' was her phrase." I willingly concede that there is a powerful negative force in Sir Edward Carson's character ; indeed, I will go further and add that if I had to choose between Sir Edward and Mr. John Redmond, I would prefer Sir Edward to be my leader. He has force of some sort, and even a certain dignity of utterance, whereas Mr. Redmond has no force at all, but is merely an unimaginative orator. In another part of this book I have stated that Sir Edward Carson made tentative offers of friendship to Mr. Redmond which that gentleman, with incredible obtuseness, did not accept ; and for that reason, as much as for any other, Sir Edward comes nearer to the Young Irishman's ideal of a reconciler than Mr. Redmond does. But when that admission is made, there is still a large area of irritant matter in Sir Edward's public character which makes it difficult for Young Irishmen to have any sympathy with him. Irish affairs are so crude that the pioneers of a reconciled Ireland must spend their early days in hacking their way through growths with some indifference. When paths have been made, and communications have been established in safety between North and South, the Young Irishmen will take note of subtleties.

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concerned, with Dublin. He has never lived in Ulster, and, to one's knowledge, he has no kinsmen there. The Englishman might almost be pardoned for ascribing the choice of Sir Edward as leader of the Ulster Unionists to the general topsy-turvyness of Irish life. Apart altogether from the fact that his temperament is so essentially alien to the traditional Ulster temperament, there is the further fact that his political life has been a wholly undistinguished one. He was Solicitor-General for Ireland in 1892 and Solicitor-General for England from 1900 until 1906. That is his political record as an officer of State. His name cannot be associated with any measure for the amelioration of Irish or British life. One cannot say of him, as one could say of Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, that he has done things which compel the respect of his most bitter opponent. He has never attempted, probably never even thought of, improvements for Dublin or Belfast such as Mr. Chamberlain achieved for Birmingham. His name is not linked with any statute of well-being as Mr. Chamberlain's name is linked with the Workmen's Compensation Act. He has never shown any signs of having such a vision as filled Mr. Chamberlain's mind when he proposed to forge a Tariff bond about the British Empire. He has never said or done anything in the whole of his political

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career to denote that he possesses any constructive faculty whatever. His success has been won as a lawyer, and even that has been won before juries rather than before judges ; and the beginnings of his legal success are associated in the minds of the overwhelming majority of his countrymen with the process commonly known as “fouling one’s own nest.” If one compares Sir Edward Carson’s life with that of, say, Sir Horace Plunkett, one sees immediately that it is an empty life. Why, then, was he chosen to be the leader of the Ulster Unionists ?

### 8

The explanation, to anyone who knows Ulster, is very plain. Sir Edward Carson was chosen to be the leader of the Unionists in Ulster because he could be trusted not to go too far ; for his character as the final Comic Irishman, the Bedadderer and Be-jabberer, dominated and controlled his character as a man of impulse, rash and hot-tempered.

### 9

And here I must digress. I must quit the character of Sir Edward, for a section or two, and deal with the Ulstermen themselves, and with their opposition to Home Rule.

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The Ulsterman is opposed to Home Rule for two reasons. He dislikes the Roman Catholic Church, and is of opinion that Home Rule, as the late Duke of Abercorn phrased it, means Rome Rule. His second ground of opposition to Home Rule lies in his contempt for the business capacity of the average Nationalist : he fears that they will so misrule Ireland that the cost of government will increase inordinately and that he and his kinsmen will find the incidence of taxation so arranged by the Catholic majority that Ulster will have to bear the heaviest part of it. I am not now concerned with the truth or falsity of these beliefs. I merely state that they are held, and sincerely held, by the mass of the Ulster Protestants. The fear of Catholicism is, of course, the stronger of the two. I have met Belfastmen who have said to me that they would become Home Rulers were it not for the Catholic Church. Those two objections to Home Rule are the beginning and the end of the Ulster Protestant opposition to Irish autonomy. If any man tells the reader that the Ulstermen are afraid of their Catholic countrymen in a physical sense or in a business sense, that man is a liar. The Ulsterman is not physically afraid of any living man, and his business instinct is so keen that he can make a good livelihood where other men would starve.

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Now one of the things which is most firmly settled in the skull of every Irishman, Protestant or Catholic, is the belief that Englishmen can be scared into doing things which no amount of argument or persuasion would induce them to do. Irishmen point out that the Fenian outrages at Clerkenwell Prison had the effect of causing Mr. Gladstone to change his mind completely about Home Rule ; and Irish political history is full of examples of the ease with which Irishmen have bullied Englishmen.

### 10

Consider, then, the plight of the Ulster Unionists. They strongly objected to the passage of the Home Rule Bill, but they were very much afraid that it would be passed by Mr. Asquith's Government. The times had changed since the days when Mr. Gladstone's measures were before the House of Commons. English opinion, on the whole, was favourable towards Home Rule. Sir Edward Carson openly lamented over the indifference of the English electorate when he pleaded with it. The cause of this change, apart altogether from the justice and desirability of Home Rule, was that the gift of self-government to the Boers had been remarkably successful, and Englishmen could

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not help thinking that it was unfair to grant Home Rule to men who were recently their enemies and withhold it from men who had helped to conquer those enemies. The ignominious failure of De Wet's rebellion at the beginning of the European Disaster was the most emphatic confirmation any man could desire of the wisdom of conceding self-government to a subject people. If General Botha had been in the position that Mr. John Redmond was until the passage of the Home Rule Bill, will anyone deny that Colonel Maritz would almost certainly have raised the entire Boer population against British rule in South Africa, and that they and the Germans would have caused serious suffering to the British people in that land, even if they had not expelled them from it ? This proof of the wisdom of Home Rule was not furnished until the War began, but the sense of unfair dealing with the Irish people was active in the minds of the English people, and it swelled almost to the point of danger to the English comity when the notorious Curragh Camp mutiny took place. At that moment, had the Liberals chosen to seek re-election, there would not have been a single Conservative Member of Parliament left in the North of England.

But the Ulster Unionists had to face, not only the indifference of the English electorate, but also the indifference of the young

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men of Ulster. They had even to face the fact that many young men of ability were actually in favour of Home Rule. It was very noticeable that the leaders of the Anti-Home Rule campaign were mainly old men, so old, indeed, that it did not seem quite natural for some of them to be still alive. The young men of Ulster, on the whole, were not prepared to die in any ditch, first or last, in order to prevent the enactment of the Home Rule Bill, and a reputable number of them were positively prepared to fight for its passage. It is to be regretted that the Old Men of Ulster acted ignobly to some of these young men. Intimidation, ranging from threats of social ostracism to threats of dismissal from employment, was used to induce them to sign the Covenant or join the Ulster Volunteers. There was talk of boycotting all Protestant Home Rulers, and there was an outburst of personal ill-will among men who had previously been on friendly terms. And there were shameful scenes of violence in the shipyards, where gangs of infuriated Orange louts attacked isolated Catholics or Protestant Home Rulers and subjected them to acts of outrage and brutality which cannot be fitly described. The Old Men of Ulster had plenty of rebuke to offer to some Nationalist ruffians who interfered with a Sunday-school procession in a little country town, but they had not

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one word of rebuke to offer to the hooligans of their own side in the shipyards. Nevertheless, the Old Men did not succeed in terrorising the young men, and since that is so, and failure is always pitiable even when success would have been contemptible, we need not lay too great stress on the cruelties and tyrannies that were enacted by the Old Men in the days when their hearts were most bitter and their rages most fierce ; for Time passes and, thank God, takes Old Men with it.

There was an additional factor in the problem. It was this, that none of the business men of Ulster, old or young, with the possible exception of Captain Craig, had any taste for rebellion. They certainly had not the appetite for insurrection that their fathers had in 1798. Rebellions are uncertain things : they may succeed and they may fail. The business men knew that a rebellion, whether it failed or succeeded, would certainly ruin them. Ruin and death are incidents in the career of men who are set on their purpose, and had the Anti-Home Rule Movement had behind it the passion that the Balkan peoples must have felt against the Turks when they rose against them in the last Balkan wars, none of its leaders would have flinched from poverty or death. But if a man is to be ruined or killed, he wishes at least to be certain that

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his ruin or death are caused by a great matter. The North Americans must have had some feeling of exaltation in the Civil War when they reflected that by their death or ruin they were helping to make freedom more secure. But a paltry little brawl about the Pope and King William, a mean squabble about the site of government—who could feel any exaltation in such a fight as that—who could willingly, gladly face ruin and destruction for that sake ?

The Old Men of Ulster had no stomach for an empty rebellion. I imagine that their mental attitude towards the Bill was that they would be very glad to prevent its passage into law, that they would take every conceivable step in order to prevent its passage into law, but that, should they fail to do so, they would make the best of a bad job. That mental attitude was never openly expressed in words, and not very often privately expressed in words ; but it was, I think, a general mental attitude. When men are most in despair of victory, they are often most assertive of their confidence of winning ; and although the Old Men of Ulster protested (and still protest, those of them that are left) that the Home Rule Bill would never become law or, if it did, that they would never submit to the jurisdiction of a Dublin Parliament, I do not doubt that in their hearts they were aware that the Bill

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would pass and were already scheming in their minds for a way of making Ulstermen dominant in the new legislature. (The Ulstermen will, of course, speedily win control of the parliament, for it is the habit of Ulstermen to dominate any society in which they may find themselves. God did not make them Ulstermen for nothing.)

What, then, was to be done ? Obviously, the only thing to do was to try once more the old game of scaring the Englishman out of his wits.

But the thing had to be done carefully. It was vital to the welfare of Ulster that the process of scaring the Englishman out of his wits should not be allowed to develop into a real, red terror. The Ulster Protestant man in the street resembles all other men in the street : he is simpler and more sincere than his leaders ; and it would have been very easy for the masters of Sir Edward Carson to have created a bloody revolution in Ireland had they chosen to make one. Bloody revolutions, however, are expensive and incalculable things, likely at any moment to end in the violent death of those who begin them ; and so the masters of Sir Edward Carson were resolved to take as few risks of causing a real rebellion as possible. There was, all the time, a possibility that blood would be spilled in Belfast, and the great labour of the leaders was to make that

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possibility as slender as they could. Their problem, therefore, became twofold : on the one hand, they had to scare the English people, and on the other hand, they had to control their own people. They found a solution of the problem which was extremely ingenious and economical, and might in all human probability have been successful, had it not been for one thing which was beyond the ken of men. They formed the Ulster Volunteer Corps. There was to be a gigantic appearance of armed men and stiff-lipped rebels ; there was to be drilling and signalling and gun-running and a huge alarm of military movements. In a very short time Ulster became like a camp. Motorcyclists carried dispatches from one officer to another. ("Why the hell haven't you sent back that pouch of tobacco I lent you last Tuesday !") Heliographers perched themselves on high places and sent the sun's rays shimmering into all sorts of corners. Young fellows, always willing to seize an opportunity of improving their material condition, volunteered to act as wireless telegraphists and were taught the mysteries of Signor Marconi's discovery free of all expense to themselves. The young ladies took to nursing and were frequently photographed in their pretty uniforms. The elderly ladies were photographed almost as often. And then, when the organisation had

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been shaped to a satisfactory mould, a number of English journalists were carefully conducted through the province and invited to describe the horrors of civil war in their newspapers. English dukes and bodies of working men, judiciously selected from "all parties," were taken round Belfast and other cities by "dry nurses," so that they might see how wonderfully superior the Protestant is to the Catholic. The whole thing was to be very jolly. The Ulster Catholics, who enjoy the game of pulling the Englishman's leg as heartily as do the Ulster Protestants, entered into the spirit of the thing, and they, too, helped to make a picture of dread for the purpose of scarifying the English. All this was easy enough to arrange. The important thing was that it should not be allowed to become a serious affair to the Ulstermen themselves. It could only be prevented from becoming a disaster to Ulster by rigidly refusing to allow any Ulsterman to be leader of the Ulster Movement

### 11

If an Ulsterman had led the Ulster Unionist Movement he would inevitably have turned the thing into a reality. There were hundreds of Ulstermen burning with fierce passion against Home Rule, any one

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of whom could have created a real rebellion in ten minutes had the rest of the Ulstermen put him into the position to make it. It was a hard job to restrain some of these fellows, many of whom were ministers of religion. Every now and then one of them would break out with a threat to kick King George's crown into the Boyne if His Majesty should dare to sign the Home Rule Bill, and a Member of Parliament, with tears in his voice, informed an audience that he would never, never, *never* again sing the National Anthem if the Bill were passed. One can scarcely imagine what lurid threats against the King were uttered in the little back streets by Sandy Row and the Shankill Road. The astute old men who organised the Ulster Movement were in no mind to run the risk of being landed in a mess of blood and battered bodies ; so they resolutely inhibited any Ulsterman from leadership. If they had wished to have a rebellion such as their forefathers had wished to have when England was embarrassed by the American War of Independence, they would not have sent for Sir Edward Carson : they would have sent for Sir Roger Casement. Sir Edward Carson lunched with the Kaiser a month or two before the European Disaster began ; and his followers openly bragged of the fact that a powerful foreign monarch, whose name began with a "W," had offered

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to help Ulster in the event of the Home Rule Bill becoming law. Ulster Unionist Members of Parliament actually made speeches in which they declared that they would much rather be ruled by the Kaiser than by Mr. Redmond ; and a number of innocent German journalists and officers came to Ulster on purpose to see the rebellion begin.

. . . But there was no meaning in that luncheon, so far as Sir Edward Carson was concerned. If the Kaiser really offered to help Sir Edward to resist Home Rule, I am certain that Sir Edward winked the other eye. He had no earthly intention of allowing the Kaiser or any foreign monarch to land troops in Ulster or anywhere else, and those party-blinded men who go about darkly suggesting that Sir Edward should be hanged for high treason are fools. It is not Dublin playboys who make rebellions : it is Ulster-men who make them. When the European Disaster happened, it was not Sir Edward Carson who instantly set off to Berlin with an offer of service to the Kaiser : it was Sir Roger Casement. Sir Edward Carson closed his mouth on the first moment that real guns began to go off, and he has not opened it since, nor is he likely to open it until all danger of real guns going off is over. But Sir Roger Casement, the Ulsterman, born in County Antrim, a Protestant from one of the precious counties of the " north-east

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corner," bolted to Berlin with the utmost celerity.

### 12

The Ulstermen knew that they could not hope to prevent the Ulster Movement from culminating in a tragedy if they permitted an Ulsterman to be their leader. So they sent for the Dublin playboy, the final Comic Irishman, Sir Edward Carson, and bade him to be their leader. They hired a superannuated general from Pinner, named Richardson, and made him Commander-in-Chief of the Ulster Volunteers, an appointment which tickled *The Times* so much that it printed General Richardson's title in inverted commas as if he were "General" Booth. If the Ulstermen had wanted a real general for a real rebellion, they would have given the command to Captain Craig, a genial distiller who served in South Africa and would fight Nationalists with almost greater avidity than he would fight Germans. Captain Craig was debarred from the command because he is an Ulsterman and therefore a man of unique sincerity. If the leaders of the Movement had thought it worth while to organise a fleet of ferry-boats on Lough Neagh or in Belfast Lough, they would certainly have given the command of it to Goo' Dole Charlie Beresford. They did not, how-

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ever, consider this necessary. Perhaps they thought that one Comic Irishman was enough at a time. Having appointed Sir Edward Carson and "General" Richardson to their posts, the Ulstermen next let loose on the province a lot of tame Tory Members of Parliament and told them to be as fierce and spluttery as they could. They even imported Mr. Frederick Edwin Smith,\* the celebrated comedian, and made a Galloper of him because, as one of them subsequently said to me in private, they needed some light relief in the programme. Then there was a great to-do, a beating of drums and tootling of trumpets, and much oratory and Press sensation. A Provisional Government, innocent of any working-man member, was established. Lord Northcliffe became excited, as is his habit, and sent a cargo of young gentlemen from *The Daily Mail* over to Belfast to act as war correspondents. The miserable Kaiser, having been gulled by Sir Edward as effectively as Lord Northcliffe had been, sent over some correspon-

\* Since the above was written, a Coalition Government has been formed in England, and Mr. Smith has been appointed Solicitor-General. He has also been given a title. Moreover, the humble Galloper of the Ulster Volunteer Force has been promoted to be a Lieutenant-Colonel in the Regular Army. This rapid promotion, which has utterly astounded military officers who are not lawyers, is no doubt the reward due to some piece of gallantry performed on the battlefield by Sir Frederick which has, unaccountably, escaped the notice of the newspapers.

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dents from Germany. All was ready. The army was drilling, the orators were orating, Mr. F. E. Smith was galloping, Goo' Dole Charlie Beresford was writing his reminiscences, the ladies were waiting for the wounded with bandages and lint, the heliographers were tinkering with the sun, the cinematograph operators had obtained the focus, and the Pressmen had their notebooks out and their pencils sharpened. All was ready. The army was to march round the walls of Jericho seven times and then let a great shout out of it, when the walls of Jericho would obligingly fall down : the English people, completely and utterly scared out of their wits, would refuse to allow the Home Rule Bill to be passed. . . .

### 13

And then the Great War broke out, and the Ulster Movement collapsed. Sir Edward Carson did not rush on to the battlefield : he rushed into church and got married. . . .

### 14

But apart from the diversion caused by the Disaster, the leaders of the Movement had seen signs that the English people were not in the least scared by all this paraphernalia of war. They were, in fact, totally

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indifferent to the Ulster Volunteers. It is conceivable that some of the astute old men who made the Movement (most of them are now dead) were almost thankful that the European Disaster prevented all possibility of an Irish Disaster. One salutes them in their graves because they had the Ulster force even when they were in the wrong ; one realises that they must have been grievously pained when they noticed how indifferent the Young Ulstermen were to the perils and dangers of Home Rule, how keen, indeed, some of the Young Men were that Ireland should be self-governing ; but one turns from their tombs very gladly in the sure and certain hope that the chemicals of time will dissolve all the harsh hatreds that have separated Irishmen and made their land a house of brawling brothers. "The time God allots to each one of us is like a precious tissue which we embroider as we best know how," wrote Sylvestre Bonnard in M. Anatole France's charming story, and perhaps it was inevitable that those old men of Ulster should embroider a displeasing design on the tissue that God had given them, a design full of discord and sharp angles ; but we who follow them will not continue to work after their pattern. We have finer designs to fashion.

## CHAPTER IV

### 1

THE reader may now demand what is to be the end of all this pother. There are two armies in Ireland, one controlled by the Unionists and the other by the Nationalists. The first army is well organised, well armed, and well drilled : the second, for a variety of reasons, mainly connected with finance and the fact that it has been in existence a shorter time than the Ulster army, is less well organised, poorly armed, and not very well drilled. The material of both armies is magnificent : the men, for they are Irish, are the finest in the world. Are these men, when the War is over, to set themselves again to the bitterness of civil strife ?

The factors in the situation are very diverse, and there are inflammatory elements in them which might, by themselves, set the establishment on fire ; but when all the factors are considered, the reader will see that there is a very strong probability that the inflammatory elements will be made harmless. It is true that there is still a great deal of bitterness in Ireland on the Home Rule question : the War has not

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obliterated the ancient lines of demarcation, and the little politicians still mumble darkly of what they will do when peace comes again. One incredulously reads ungenerous comparisons drawn between the two classes of Irishmen by party hacks until, almost, one imagines that these witless men believe that the War was begun in order to provide them with political party arguments. If the fate of Ireland were left in the hands of the little politicians, it would, indeed, be desperate ; but the spleen which lies in the little politicians' beastly insides is, fortunately, less strong than the spirit of goodwill which burns in the hearts of the Young Irishmen ; and so it is likely in the end that the little politicians will perish.

But there are strong factors to be counted in support of the Young Irishmen, which I will now enumerate.

### 2

The first is the European Disaster. No one can say how far the War will act as a solvent of Irish problems, but it is very improbable that those of the Volunteers, Ulster and Nationalist, who have enlisted for foreign service and have fought together in France and Flanders will willingly consent to take up arms against each other in Ireland ; and it is certain that, if they were

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so disposed, the English people, sickened of blood and battle, would not permit them to fight.

The reaction from the destruction of the Disaster may or may not act after the fashion of the great vapour in Mr. H. G. Wells's story, "In the Days of the Comet"; that is an element on which no one can calculate. But there are other elements in this Irish problem which are calculable, and these, fortunately, are likely to operate pacifically. I stated in the previous chapter that the Ulster Unionist Movement was mainly engineered by old men, and I added that most of the young men of affairs were either indifferent to Home Rule or actually in favour of it. That is, perhaps, the most important of all the factors in the situation. One runs over in one's mind the names of all the men who were behind the scenes in Belfast, and is startled to discover how many of them have died since the Provisional Government was established. During the year 1914, there was something like an epidemic of deaths among the old men who were the real leaders of the Movement. They were men of very great ability and courage and resource, and could, had their minds not have been cramped by their objections to Home Rule, have served Ireland magnificently. It is odd now to reflect that they could not be persuaded to behave in the

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larger sphere of national life as they behaved in the smaller sphere of co-operative enterprise. Such a man as the late Right Honourable Thomas Sinclair, a man of singular integrity and judgment, had no difficulty whatever in working with Nationalists and Catholics on committees of the Irish Agricultural Organisation Society ; but some perverse thing operating in his mind made him refuse to work with them in government. There were many men in Belfast such as he who had all the potentialities of great Irishmen, but, because of traditional prejudices and hatreds, persisted in being only little Ulstermen.

The most vital of them are dead ; and there is a gap now in Irish life. The young men, tentatively feeling their way to power, have not yet become sufficiently influential to take their place ; but undoubtedly the young men will find their way to power. It is on that likelihood that the hope of Irish unity rests.

A third factor, much less important than the two already stated, is connected with the finance of the Movement. It is indisputable that a great deal of money was donated to the Ulster Movement by English Conservatives whose anxiety was, not so much to prevent the enactment of Home Rule, as to dislodge the Liberal Government from power. Mr. Lloyd George's Land

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Legislation, actual and proposed, together with the increase in the Death Duties and the change in the incidence of the Income Tax caused by the introduction of the Super Tax considerably alarmed the classes who live on rent and interest. I remember asking the editor of a Conservative newspaper why his journal was so devoted to the Orangemen, and he informed me that his interest was due to the fact that all the rich people were on the side of the Orangemen, whom he personally disliked. The prospect of civil war in Ireland was sufficiently alarming to the electorate in England to cause a strong revulsion of feeling against the Liberals ; and, in their own interests, the moneyed classes in England took considerable pains and incurred considerable expense in order to enlarge that prospect. It was not love of the Orangeman that caused the Duke of This and My Lady That to exert themselves so mightily in behalf of the Union : it was the simpler desire to be delivered from the burden of contributing any more money to the cost of maintaining their country than they could help.

The War has made it very difficult for these ladies and gentlemen to continue to contribute to the war-chest of the Ulster Movement. Fortunes have been diminished or made unstable ; the income tax is likely to reach a high figure ; and for a generation

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or two, most of us will feel strongly the necessity of retrenching our expenditure. Many large estates have been seriously embarrassed because Death Duties have had to be paid on them twice and sometimes oftener in quick succession ; and here and there one hears hints that some of them will have to be broken up. The War, too, may bring in its trail a great deal of poverty and unemployment (though I am personally of opinion that wise statesmanship can obviate a great deal of such distress by the judicious discharge of troops when the War is over and the raising of large loans to accelerate employment in all works of repair made necessary by hostile operations). If the contributions to the Ulster war-chest have not already ceased to flow in, they very speedily will do so.

I do not suggest that the sudden cessation of money contributions to their funds will cause Ulstermen to submit to Mr. Redmond's government ; for the opposition of the Ulstermen to Home Rule is not a purchasable commodity ; but I do suggest that this factor, operating with the other factors I have named, will very probably cause the armed opposition to collapse into a sullen resentment which may manifest itself in sporadic riots, but will, given intelligent government, die of inanition.

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### **3**

I have used the word "submit" in the last paragraph, and I now make a fresh paragraph in order that I may more emphatically repudiate the idea which the word connotes. There will be no submission on the part of any section of the Irish people to any other section. The Ulster Protestant will not be ruled by Mr. Redmond in the way in which a vanquished people are ruled by their conquerors. There will not be any conquerors, there will not be any vanquished people. When King George opens his Parliament on College Green, Irishmen will be celebrating, not the victory of Nationalists over Unionists, Catholics over Protestants, but the reconciliation for ever of all Irishmen, the fusion of North and South into the solidity of a nation.

### **4**

But apart from the factors I have set forth in the preceding sections of this chapter, there is the additional factor that the Ulstermen themselves by now have begun to feel that there is an element of the ridiculous in the whole Movement. When Sir Edward Carson first said, "I will die in

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the last ditch rather than submit to a Home Rule Government," he was probably impressive. I do not doubt that he filled his auditors with emotion and that they resolved that they would accompany him into that ditch. But when he had said the same thing for the three-hundred-and-fifty-ninth time without even getting a speck of mud on his clothes, the heroic period became a catchword ; and young lads began to make appointments to meet their sweethearts in the last ditch. Some of them became disrespectful to Sir Edward himself. They muttered to themselves, "Aye, you'll die in the *last* ditch all right, but you'll expect us to die in the *first* one!" The truth of the scriptural denunciation of "vain repetitions" was once more exemplified. Sir Edward's passionate exhortations to implacable resistance invariably ended in his moving the adjournment of the death-in-the-last-ditch to the following session. One got the sensation in listening to his speeches that at any moment he might say, "Gentlemen of the jury!" instead of "Men of Ulster." No one in Ireland (and very few out of it) had the slightest belief in the sincerity of Mr. F. E. Smith. There was a time when everyone in Ireland believed in the sincerity of Sir Edward Carson. The mass of Irishmen still believe in his sincerity, but there is a feeling of wonder in the minds

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of many of them as to what exactly is the thing about which he is sincere. But the question of his sincerity is neither here nor there. What is of consequence is that, whether he willed it or not, he has made rebellion in Ulster impossible by postponing it until the heart was taken out of the rebels. I believe that the wise old men who were behind Sir Edward Carson, when they saw how indifferent the English people were to their alarms and excursions, deliberately schemed for delay and postponement in order to take the "fizz" out of the Movement.

### 5

Ulster may be sulky at first ; Ulster may refuse to send representatives to the Irish Parliament ; there may even be a show of ruling by the Provisional Government, and possibly rioting in the poorer parts of Belfast and Derry and Portadown and other towns ; but in the end, Ulster will come in. Ulster will not be able to resist the temptation to take Irish affairs in control and teach the silly Dubliners how to manage their business. In a previous chapter, I stated that Dublin has a corrupt municipal body. So has Belfast. But the difference between the Corporation of Belfast and the Corporation of Dublin is

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that the former is also efficient while the latter is as incompetent as it can be. Belfast may practise duplicity in getting its work done, but it gets it done. What Ireland needs is, not Home Rule, but Ulster Rule ; and when Ulster has recovered from her sulks, she will take care that Ireland gets it.

## CHAPTER V

### 1

I HAVE several times in the course of this book made reference to the Young Irishmen, and the reader may be curious to know more of them. There is no organised body of Young Irishmen ; they do not compose a society with a secretary and treasurer and registered offices and annual meetings and published reports. They are not even completely aware of each other, nor are they, as the generic title I have given to them may seem to denote, all of one sex. The Young Irishmen are, indeed, an idea rather than an organisation, and the idea on its negative side relates to a profound impatience with the ideals and groupings of the Old Irishmen, and, on its positive side, to an intense desire to reconcile all Irishmen to the common purpose of serving Ireland. The Old Irishmen, when they encountered a stranger, began by asking, “ Is he a Catholic or a Protestant ? ” and on the reply to that question depended their readiness to be friendly. The Young Irishman does not care whether the stranger be a Catholic or a Protestant, so long as he is an Irishman and is willing

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to work for Ireland. The Protestant Young Irishman will turn away from any Protestant, however devout he may be, if he is not prepared to put Ireland before sect ; the Catholic Young Irishman will turn away from any Catholic, even though he be a Cardinal, who is not prepared to put Ireland in the first place in his heart. The religion of a Young Irishman is a personal, private concern : the nationality of a Young Irishman is his general, public affair ; and it is possible for a Catholic and a Protestant to conduct a co-operative creamery or promote a scheme of housing reform without quarrelling over the respective merits of the Pope and William of Orange. Even the Old Irishmen were able to work with considerable amity in local committees of the I.A.O.S. The Young Irishmen propose to do generally in Irish politics what the Old Irishmen did particularly in co-operative societies.

The Young Irishman wishes to make a drastic change in the state of Irish affairs. Wherever he looks in Ireland he finds inferior institutions, corrupt management, artificial divisions, an ignorant, prejudiced Press, an uninstructed people and a low level of subsistence. When he compares his country with England, he is humiliated by the difference between them. He reads the history of Ireland, and has a sense of horror when he realises how deficient in spiritual quality his

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contemporaries are in comparison with their forefathers. He feels that the greatest danger to Irish development lies in the complacency and self-deception of the Irish people. It is not English tyranny which is destroying Ireland, for there is no English tyranny now: it is Irish blindness which is destroying it.

### 2

Someone said to Lady Gregory on one occasion, "Why is it that you, who are an old woman, write comedies for the Abbey Theatre, while the young dramatists write tragical pieces or pieces with a tendency towards bitter criticism?" Lady Gregory said, "It is because I am an old woman!" And, indeed, it is natural for young artists to think in terms of tragedy, whereas the old, who know that life is full of the compensation of which Emerson wrote, can smile or laugh even when there is occasion for tears. But Lady Gregory's reply does not completely answer the question. Young men's minds are full of dreams of perfection. They love humanity in the abstract so heartily that when they contemplate humanity in the concrete, they lose their tempers. The bitter plays that are written for the Abbey Theatre are not composed by ill-natured men or men who hate Ireland:

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they are written by disappointed men who love Ireland so dearly that they cannot bear to see her failures unmoved. Mr. Bernard Shaw once complained that when he drew attention to some evil, people became enraged and behaved as if they believed that he had caused the evil. That is the attitude of the mass of Irish people towards the Abbey Dramatists. Whenever a play is performed at the Abbey in which some despicable aspect of Irish life is exposed, the reporters who act as critics in Dublin denounce the author of it as a detractor of the Irish people, a slanderer, a decadent, a perpetrator of outrage. One would have imagined that it would in time have become apparent to these people that the unanimity with which the Young Dramatists (the bulk of whom have no personal knowledge of each other) expose flaw after flaw in the Irish body does indicate that there are some flaws. That, however, is not the way with the Irish journalist or the class for which he writes. Their illusion is that there are no flaws in the Irish body, and that anyone who says there are is a foul calumniator. The sense of reality is very slight in Ireland. Mr. Shaw, in the preface to "John Bull's Other Island," has described Englishmen as sentimentalists and Irishmen as realists. The description is not strictly accurate. Irishmen have a keen sense of reality about

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other people : they have no sense of reality about themselves. They see the ridiculous side of other men, but they do not see the ridiculous side of themselves. The chief difference between Irishmen and Englishmen sometimes seems to me to be that Irishmen have wit and Englishmen have humour. I would rather have humour than have wit.

### 3

The Young Irishmen desire first of all to bring a sense of reality into Ireland. The struggle for self-government served as a bandage about Ireland's eyes. We have formally obtained self-government, but the bandage is still in its place. It is the job of the Young Irishmen to remove it. Before they can do this, however, they will have to make Irishmen realise that there is a bandage. When they have done that, they will have a second struggle in order to make Irishmen realise that the bandage ought to be removed. They will encounter many opponents who will swear, first, that there is no bandage at all, and, second, that it is a fine bandage and very becoming to Ireland's eyes.

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I think the fact that most oppresses Young Irishmen is the lack of spiritual impulse in Ireland. I do not say that spiritual feeling is dead in Ireland, for if that were true, Ireland would also be dead; but I do say that the spiritual impulse is so hidden away by a great covering of materialism that it is almost impossible to see it. It is natural, perhaps, that materialism should envelop Ireland in these days. Any people, suddenly transformed from a condition of acute poverty to a condition of increasing prosperity, is likely to have its table of values disarranged and to set an absurd price on material things. The man who has lived in poverty during part of his life thinks a great deal more of money when he gets it than the man who has always had money. Ireland is in that condition. The Irish peasant has reached that point of existence at which money seems to him to be the only thing in the world that matters. Old generosities and finely reckless acts have been swallowed up in *acquisitiveness*. Mr. Yeats, lamenting the decline of the romance and the growth of the huckster spirit in Ireland, wrote a poem from which these verses are taken :

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What need you, being come to sense,  
But fumble in a greasy till  
And add the half-pence to the pence  
And prayer to shivering prayer, until  
You have dried the marrow from the bone ;  
For men were born to pray and save,  
Romantic Ireland's dead and gone,  
It's with O'Leary in the grave.

Was it for this the wild geese spread  
Their grey wings upon every tide ;  
For this that all that blood was shed,  
For this Edward Fitzgerald died  
And Robert Emmet and Wolfe Tone,  
All that delirium of the brave ;  
Romantic Ireland's dead and gone,  
It's with O'Leary in the grave.

The natural outcome of the huckster spirit is corruption, and the natural outcome of corruption is that the second-rate is always substituted for the best. It was, perhaps, natural that the English people should choose a dishonest meat contractor for their Patron Saint, for the English cannot even conduct a war without defrauding each other ; but it is lamentable that the Irish people should place a gombeen man in the place of St. Patrick. My dead friend, Fred Ryan, mocked the Dublin Theosophists to me once. "Do they think," he said, "the Irish people will turn the Virgin Mary out of heaven and put Madame Blavatsky in her place ! " They have done something

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infinitely worse than that : they have made an altar of a huckster's till.

### 5

The Young Irishmen have no leader : he has not yet revealed himself, and until he does so, they will not have a corporate being. The lack of a leader means, of course, that most of their energies will be dissipated at first in expressions of discontent. They will be called Prigs, and, indeed, they will be in much danger of falling into Priggery ; but the vital need of action will save the bulk of them from permanent Priggery. It may be that Sir Horace Plunkett, who is their inspiration, will become their leader, but the question of headship is not one of immediate consequence. The Young Irishmen have first of all, as I have said, to bring a sense of reality into Ireland. They have also to make themselves capable of conducting affairs. Their search, for a time, will be for knowledge and then for experience ; and when they have found these two things, they will have to make opinion in Ireland. They will have to spend years in undermining the position of the Old Irishmen so that they may dislodge them from authority with ease. They will meet in obscure rooms and discuss this problem

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and that. They will seek out young men and women with alert minds and proselytise them. They will talk in one place and another of ways of altering things, and will fortify themselves with all the information they can obtain. They will invade the newspapers, they will write letters and articles and pamphlets and books, they will make speeches in halls and at street corners, and above all they will mock the Old Irishmen. Ridicule is the weapon by which the self-satisfied may be destroyed, and with ridicule the Young Irishmen will arm themselves against the Old Irishmen. If Ireland is to be made a place of value, the Old Irishmen and the things for which they stand must be destroyed. Mr. John Redmond and Sir Edward Carson, these and their like must perish if Ireland is to be saved.

### 6

For the Young Irishmen are as impatient with Mr. Redmond as they are with Sir Edward Carson. They look into his volume of speeches and find that they are full of stale rhetoric, that Mr. Redmond, at the end of his career, is saying the same things that he was saying at the beginning of it, not because of an invulnerable devotion to consistency, but simply because he has

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nothing else to say. They do not discover any vision in Mr. Redmond's speeches. He says, "Let's have Home Rule!" but he does not say what is to be done with it when it is obtained. They do not know what Mr. Redmond thinks of the Dublin housing scandal or the Belfast sweating scandal or the corruption in the municipal bodies; and they strongly suspect that Mr. Redmond is quite content to leave these messes as they are. They feel, too, that he bungled the Home Rule Movement. They feel that he made very little effort to conciliate the Ulstermen, that he remained obstinate when Sir Edward Carson made tentative offers of friendship. In his situation of triumph, they feel, he ought to have gone to Belfast, not as a conqueror but as a conciliator, and have asked the Orangemen what he could do to reconcile them to the rest of their countrymen. It was a time for generosity, for quixotic generosity, almost for self-abasement. One thinks of the magnificent self-abasement of Father Zossima before Dmitri Karamazov in Doestoevsky's novel, "The Brothers Karamazov," and wonders what would have been the fate of Ireland had Mr. Redmond had some of the fine quality of the old Russian monk. The Belfast man is uncouth in appearance and harsh in manner, but there is a strong strain of chivalry in his nature. He is not insensitive to nobility.

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Men misunderstand him because his language is violent ; they do not understand that he does not act as violently as he talks. If Mr. Redmond had been a man of fine temper, if he had had any of the quality of which great men are made, he would have touched the chivalrous chord in the Belfastman, and we might now be celebrating the nuptials of the North and the South instead of speculating anxiously on the future of the rival armies. . . .

One's chief recollection of Mr. Redmond's part in that campaign of muddled motives and bitter reproaches and lost opportunities and organised hatred which culminated in the establishment of potentially destructive forces, is that he made a speech somewhere in the South of Ireland in which he spoke of taking the Home Rule ship into harbour at full speed ! When captains take their ships at full speed into harbour, they wreck them. . . . The Young Irishmen have no use for a man who openly expresses his intention of behaving in a way which would cause the Board of Trade to suspend his certificate if he were a master mariner.

And if the Young Irishmen cannot discover a leader or even a colleague in Mr. Redmond, they are equally unable to dis-

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cover a leader in any of his fellow members of the English Parliament. Mr. John Dillon, in the very middle of the European Disaster, went to Belfast and delivered a speech to the Belfast National Volunteers in which he urged them to perfect themselves in military operations so that they should "be prepared to deal with eventualities." Some apologists for Mr. Dillon have tried to excuse this abominable speech on the ground that similar speeches had been made to the Ulster Volunteers by "General" Richardson; but the fatuity of "General" Richardson (whose military knowledge, by the way, was not utilised by the Government in the course of the War) does not palliate the fatuity of Mr. Dillon. "General" Richardson, God help him, is an Englishman and cannot be expected to be accountable for his speeches, and no Irishman will take the slightest notice of him; but Mr. Dillon is an Irishman, and it is an unpardonable crime for any Irishman to incite one section of his country to enmity against another section. It is a reconciled Ireland that we desire; not an antagonised Ireland.

Nor can the Young Irishmen put their faith in Mr. Joseph Devlin. There was a time when it seemed possible that Mr. Devlin might give a shape to the Young Irishmen's spirit, but that hope was dissipated when he created the Ancient Order of

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Hibernians, a sectarian society exclusively membered by Catholics. Mr. Devlin is a Belfast man, and one might have imagined that with the awful example of the Orange Institution, that society for the propagation of religious hatred, before him, he would never have consented to create another party-religious organisation. It may be that when he contemplates the contemptible society into which the Ancient Order of Hibernians has grown, he repents of what he did ; but his repentance will not bring the leadership of the Young Irishmen to him. Their leader must be a man who is incapable of such blunders.

### 8

When the Young Irishmen turn from the Nationalists to the Unionists, and contemplate the crew which represents the Irish Conservatives in the House of Commons, their contempt for the former slithers into despair of the latter. The most able of the Ulster Unionists sits in Westminster in the interests of an English constituency, but he is known to fame exclusively as the man who hurled a book at Mr. Winston Churchill's head. It may be that it is very difficult not to hurl something at Mr. Churchill's head, but Young Irishmen do not want amateur hooligans at College

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Green, so Mr. Ronald McNeill can remain at Westminster.\*

### 9

The Young Irishmen can wait for their leader until he chooses to take his place at their head. Their business immediately is to make opinion in Ireland and to curb, if they cannot kill, the huckster spirit. Mr. Robert Lynd, in a graceful book, "Rambles in Ireland," makes a casual reference to the Congested Districts Board in these terms :

" Much good as they have unquestionably done, they have done it in the way which least encourages the spirit of self-reliance and independence among the people. But then I think the whole system which makes the people turn their eyes to London instead of to themselves for help is an incitement to servility."

It is this spirit which animates the Young Irishman. Englishmen, defending the English occupation of India and Egypt and the withholding of Home Rule from Ireland, have claimed with justice that they have effected many beneficial reforms in

\* War makes a few reputations and destroys many. It has destroyed any reputation for ability that Mr. Ronald McNeill possessed prior to August, 1914. He has become notorious as the man who asked more fatuous questions of Ministers during the War than any other member in Parliament.

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India and Egypt and in Ireland. I should be sorry to deny that Englishmen have enormously improved the conditions of life of the Irish farmer and the Indian ryot and the Egyptian fellah. The enactment of the Land Purchase Laws in Ireland, the widespread efforts to ameliorate the life of Indians, the building of the Assouan Dam and the extraordinary attempts made by Lord Kitchener to give some security of life to the fellahs, all these are ameliorative acts of which Englishmen may legitimately boast. The creation of the Assouan Dam, indeed, is a finer, more wonderful and beautiful thing than the creation of the Sphinx and the Pyramids, miserable monuments to the fatuous vanity of kings, made out of the forced labour of thousands of labourers to whom it brought no pleasure, and serving now merely as the occasion for trite remarks on Life by journalists and Cook's tourists. . . . But what, one asks oneself, is the purpose of all these ameliorative acts ? Is it merely that the fellah's belly may be full, that the ryot may be free of the money-lender, that the Irish peasant may own land ? Is there to be no end of this debilitating process of doing things for men who ought to be doing those things for themselves ? Is England always to be the dry-nurse of Ireland ? The Balfourian legislation, designed to kill Home Rule by

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kindness, of which Mr. Lynd complains in his book, has had the effect of turning Irishmen into a nation of cadgers, continually whining that the Government shall do something for them instead of setting to work and doing it for themselves. Canon Hannay, in his novels, has complained of the fact that greedy contractors or lazy people generally obtain money from the Irish Government for the erection of piers that are not needed and the distribution of seed potatoes that will not end in benefit to those to whom they are given. All over Ireland to-day may be seen grass-grown piers, providing excellent grazing for cattle, but serving no further purpose than that. It is humiliating to a Young Irishman to observe these signs of waste, the Balfourian equivalent of *panem et circenses*. If the money to pay for these piers came out of the pockets of the Irish people, they would not be built; but since that gigantic jackass, the British taxpayer, is perfectly willing to pay for anything that the muttonhead politicians propose, the Irish people are content to "bleed the blighters!" If the process of "bleeding the blighters" could be limited to draining money from the pockets of Englishmen, I should not complain; but it cannot so be limited. While the money is pouring into Ireland, the manly spirit is pouring out of it; and in the end the virtue remains with

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England, for the loss of money is of little account, but the loss of spirit is utter damnation.

### 10

If we Irishmen may not do for ourselves what Englishmen try to do for us, if we may not make decisions even when those decisions end in error, then Oliver Cromwell had better have deprived us of Connacht as an alternative to hell. The fundamental fineness of Magna Charta lies in its recognition of the right of every Englishman to make a fool of himself if he pleases to do so. The doctrine of free will means, if it means anything, that a man has the right to choose between heaven and hell. Magna Charta is the legal expression of the doctrine of Free Will : it is the legal repudiation of the doctrine of Predestination ; it enacts the fierce right of every Briton to refuse to be taken to heaven against his will. It is notable that when men are deprived of this right, as Puritans would deprive them of it, and are compelled to enter heaven against their wills, they invariably end by turning heaven into hell. It is this right that the Young Irishmen claim for their countrymen, the right to make choice, the right to do things for themselves, the right to be free men, not cadgers on another nation's bounty.

## CHAPTER VI

I MUST indicate in this chapter some of the changes that Young Irishmen desire to make in Irish affairs.

### 1

There are too many priests in Ireland, and of late years, particularly since the suppression of the congregations in France, there has been an alarming increase in the number of monks and nuns who inhabit the country. It is very difficult for a Young Irishman to speak or write on this subject because of his anxiety not to be confused with the ignorant Orangeman and the bigoted Protestant ; but it is a subject which seriously perturbs the Young Irishman, whether he be a Catholic or a Protestant. The reader must understand at the outset that when I say there are too many priests in Ireland, I am not proposing to "sap the foundations of religion" (priests are not the foundations of religion), nor am I even proposing a campaign of anti-clericalism. The Young Irishmen desire to see a reduction in the number of priests, not because they are irreligious (they are not)

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nor because they are anti-Catholic (they are not), but because they believe that there is a limit to the number of priests that any country can maintain. Ireland, most unhappily, is a land where the number of producers is considerably exceeded by the number of non-producers. We have shoals of priests, publicans, policemen, lawyers and officials in Ireland, none of whom are engaged in productive labours and have, of course, to be maintained by those who are so engaged. The police force alone is a heavy and unnecessary burden on the resources of the Irish people. It is a commonplace of politics that although the number of convictions in Scotland considerably exceeds the number of convictions in Ireland, the number of police in the latter land is very much greater than the number of police in the former. I have often seen big, strapping constables lolling in the fields in the West of Ireland. If they are unimaginative, they spend a great deal of their time in fishing (which is the unimaginative man's pastime); if they have any imagination at all, they find the boredom of their lives insupportable and are tempted to invent crimes with which they charge their neighbours in order to provide themselves with entertaining occupation. I have often wondered how much of ex-Sergeant Sheridan's criminal behaviour was due to

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the possession of a vivid imagination and the lack of adequate employment for it. The police are all men of muscular physique and would, if employed in productive work, be a valuable asset to their country. As things are, they are a curse to the community in which they are stationed and an economic loss to the nation.

Irish parents, particularly the mothers, have a strong desire to see one of their sons in the habit of a priest or a minister. Mr. T. C. Murray, in a notable play, "Maurice Harte," has shown both the strength of this pride and the disaster in which it may end. It is an ambition which is not limited to Catholic parents. The pride with which a father and mother in Cork see their son celebrating his first Mass is no greater than the pride with which a father and mother in Down hear their son preaching his first sermon ; and the personal sacrifices made by the parents in order that a son may become a priest or a minister would be heroic if the ambition were not in most cases prompted by snobbery. It proceeds less from the love of God than from "swank," from a desire less to look well in the eyes of the Almighty than from a desire to look well in the eyes of the neighbours. The principal result of this social ambition is that all over Ireland energy and intellect are being forced into one channel. The

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farmer who longs to see his son in biretta and cassock educates that son at the expense of his remaining children, and very often impoverishes himself in order to do it. Mr. Lennox Robinson, in his play "Harvest," has treated this subject dramatically. Education, in short, is not spread equally over all the children of the family, but is lavished on one of them: the boy who is dedicated to the priesthood goes to Maynooth, while his brothers and sisters go to the National School. The educational course at Maynooth, as has been pointed out by Sir Horace Plunkett in "Ireland in the New Century," is of mediocre quality, but it is immeasurably superior to the scandalously bad educational system of the elementary schools. The difference between an English Council School and an Irish National School is almost the difference between a University and a private school for the sons and daughters of reduced gentlemen kept in a back parlour in a second-rate suburb by a perfect lady who considers that her gentility is adequate compensation for her ignorance and incapacity. If the Irish priests were maintaining the reputation for learning which was established by their predecessors in the days when Ireland sent a stream of saints and scholars over the waste places of Europe to fertilise them, this concentration of knowledge in one class might not greatly

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matter ; but it is pitifully obvious to anyone who comes into contact with the modern Irish priests that they are, on the whole, men of poor intellectual quality and inconsiderable scholarship. Here is a problem of terrific dimensions. The chief energies of masses of Irish parents are devoted to securing the education of a priest at Maynooth without, however, securing a scholarly clergy, and the remaining children are left to receive an intolerably bad instruction which does not make them fit to take an adequate part in the conflicts of existence. A badly-educated farmer is an inefficient farmer, ninety-nine times out of a hundred, and in a country where the bulk of the industry is agricultural, an inefficient farming-class means national disaster.

The reader will perceive that the continued existence of an excessive number of priests and policemen, absolutely non-productive classes, on incomes which are comparatively better than the incomes of farmers and workmen in Ireland, is a factor of adverse influence on Irish destiny, particularly when he learns that the social conscience of the priests seems, in this generation, to be dormant. Perhaps it would be fairer to say that the priests of to-day are oddly lacking in a sense of proportion. Some very ill-natured attacks have been made on them because of the

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epidemic of church-building which has afflicted them during the past twenty years ; but it is impossible to acquit the priests of inconsiderate conduct in this respect. It is very human of a priest to desire to have a handsome edifice in his parish, and in favourable circumstances, it is very laudable of him to possess such a desire ; but it is an act of social selfishness for a priest to compel his parishioners to pay for the erection of a church which is utterly disproportionate in size and cost to their needs, and many priests have brought some of their people into financial straits if not to actual bankruptcy through this passion for bigness. If the churches which are erected had any beauty, one might be more lenient to these extravagances, but most of them are so outrageously ugly, surpassing the ugliest nonconformist chapel in England in sheer blatant hideousness, that the lover of fine architecture when he contemplates them feels an insurgent desire to send for the house-breaker. The priests, in short, not only impose heavy money burdens on their flocks, but also debase the public taste. Where exactly is to be found the room for spiritual emotion is difficult to say.

In many ways, too, the priests add to the economic straits of their parishioners. I do not propose to set out a list of these burdens here. It will be sufficient for my purpose

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if I name one of them. The marriage fees charged by Irish priests are outrageous. An aged peasant in the West once complained bitterly to me of the financial exactions made by his parish priest, whom he stigmatised as a man who never did anything for the poor "but live on them," and he compared the priest with the Protestant clergyman very much to the disadvantage of the priest. It appeared that the Father demanded five pounds (and sometimes more) for performing the marriage ceremony. "He counts the cars at the weddin', sir," said the old man, "an' fixes his charge accordin' to the number that are in it!" I suggested to him that the parishioners should refuse to pay these exorbitant sums, but the old man saw no sense in that. "Sure, he'd lave you at the altar!" he replied conclusively. In the same village, I met a man who, at the time of his marriage, lived in a different parish from that in which his bride lived. He had to pay marriage fees of equal amounts to the priest of each parish, about ten pounds in all. These fees, the reader must remember, are paid by men whose average weekly earnings are probably under a pound. Civil marriages, of course, are out of all thought for Irish Catholic peasants because of their religious devotion and also of the social ostracism that such marriages would create. I have always believed,

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indeed I can prove, that the stories of priestly tyranny in Ireland are greatly exaggerated. Parnell, for example, beat the priests in every combat with them. I doubt, indeed, whether the tyranny of an Irish priest is any greater than the tyranny of an English country parson; and I dare say farm labourers in the Home Counties, more especially those who are Dissenters, could tell stories of arrogant vicars which are as lurid as any that can be told of Irish priests by Belfast Orangemen. But there is enough tyranny displayed by priests towards parishioners to make Young Irishmen wish that there was a great deal less of it.

The Young Irishmen have no legal remedy to offer for this state of affairs. They realise that the change must grow naturally out of the hearts of the people themselves. I have met Irishmen (Mr. Bernard Shaw is one of them) who think that the Catholic Church ought to be established so that the priests can be regulated by law; but this is not a remedy which appeals to many Young Irishmen, who are convinced that in a country where the people are not all of one faith, the State had better not have any official cognisance of the Churches. Mr. Shaw would establish all the religious bodies, but the views of Young Irishmen are that, where all the people are of one faith, Establishment is unnecessary, and that

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where the people are of diverse faiths, Establishment is impossible. The hope of the Young Irishmen lies in the development of the Irish educational system. An instructed people will not tolerate the tyranny, great or small, of the priest. Moreover, a better system of education will enable those who are engaged in the ordinary industries of the country to ply their trades with better results, and it may be that in time the snobbery which has impelled so many men into the priesthood will disappear or at all events greatly decline, and that in place of the seekers of soft jobs who now occupy Catholic presbyteries we may get a new body of priests who are priests because they really have a vocation for their office. The chief hope of the Young Irishman, however, lies in the stirring of social conscience among the priests themselves. Young priests are more amenable to the ideas of the Young Irishmen than priests of an older generation. They have learned that a costly building does not compensate for an impoverished and uneducated people.

The attitude of the Young Irishmen towards conventional and monastic establishments is rigid and certain. They believe,

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whether they be Catholic or Protestant, in the most stringent regulation of all monasteries, convents, orphanages and charitable institutions: a Protestant orphanage or charitable institution should, in their opinion, be as rigorously inspected as a Catholic convent. The probability is that Protestants would not object to such inspection because their orphanages, particularly in Dublin, are proselytising agencies rather than pseudo-charitable, pseudo-industrial organisations. The proposal to submit convents and monasteries to the jurisdiction of the Factory Act is supported to an astonishing extent by secular priests, who do not regard the religious orders with too kindly an eye, those of them, that is, that are of a monastic character. The non-secular priests sometimes enter into competition with the seculars for the patronage of the people. The reason why the Young Irishmen desire to bring religious establishments within the scope of the Factory Acts is that many of them are sweat-shops of the worst kind: girls are employed in them in the name of charity and religion at wages which would scandalise the worst sweater in Belfast or Bethnal Green; and the products of this sweated labour are sold in competition with similar products from ordinary workshops at prices which make profit impossible for the general manu-

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facturer and shopkeeper. The convents, indeed, suck the vitality out of Ireland. Girls of the Catholic faith always desire to be nuns when they are seventeen, just as English girls of the same age always desire to Do Good to the Poor or marry clergymen or become hospital nurses. (It was that appalling female, Pamela, in Richardson's novel, who said, "How amiable a thing it is to do good !") If the girls are the daughters of men of means, they are encouraged by the nuns to enter a convent, and they take their fortunes with them. In a country with a small and declining population, any increase in the number of pledged virgins is alarming, but when that increase is accompanied by the withdrawal of money from the ordinary circuits of society in order that it may be used as a subsidy to a sweated industry, the position becomes very critical. On the one hand, young women of fortune are turned from the purposes of life in a country where, more perhaps than anywhere else, it is needful that the purposes of life should be fulfilled ; and on the other hand, young women without fortune are employed at wages which are inadequate to maintain them in health and efficiency and so renders them unfit for the function of maternity. Added to these vital losses are the trade losses sustained by tradesmen who, even when paying sweating

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wages, cannot compete with the religious orders subsidised by nuns' fortunes and the charitable donations of the devout. If the Catholic Church does not of its own volition regulate these religious orders, we may yet see a national demand for their expulsion from Ireland which will be as implacable as the demand for their expulsion from France. The Irish peasant loves God, but he also loves money, and he will not long tolerate congregations of people who exploit his love of God in order that they may ruin him. The Young Irishmen would prefer that this work of regulation should be done by the Church, and there are many reasons, more obvious to priests than to laymen, why it should be done by the Church. If fortunes are absorbed by the convents, and tradesmen are brought near to bankruptcy by the competition of convent industries, then the secular priests' sources of revenue are curtailed! . . .

### **3**

A second grave danger to Ireland is connected with the drink traffic. On the day on which this section of this chapter was written, the English newspapers contained reports of the parliamentary debate in which Mr. Lloyd George announced his table of increased duties on spirits. The Irish

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Nationalists, to a man, opposed the new taxes. This singular unanimity (for all Tories and all Radicals are not unanimous on Drink questions) is due to the fact that the Irish Nationalist Party, so to speak, is kept by the Irish publicans. The publican, indeed, is the most dangerous of all the enemies the Irish people have, and the task of conquering him will absorb a considerable part of the energies of the Young Irishmen for many generations. It is not alone that he is a retailer of liquor, which, up to a point, is harmless enough, but that he is able, through his side activities, to climb to a position of power in national and local politics. The publican is often the gombeen-man. He lends money to his neighbours at rates of interest fixed by his own caprice on condition that the borrower deals exclusively with him. This means that the borrower must purchase provisions and stores from the gombeen-man at prices fixed, not by the laws of supply and demand (for there are no laws of supply and demand in country parts in Ireland) but by the gombeen-man's knowledge of the borrower's capacity to pay. It also means that the borrower must sell the products of his farm to the gombeen-man, again at prices fixed by the latter. Money seldom passes between the two parties in these sales. The sum allowed for the farm produce is set against the debt

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incurred for provisions and drink and stores and the reduction, if possible, of the amount of the loan. It is inevitable that farms should be mortgaged to these gombeen-men and that many farms are forfeited to them. We may witness the growth in Ireland of a new race of landlords, without tradition or grace, who will involve their tenants in hardships as severe as those which were inflicted upon them by the old race.

The publicans, because of their wealth and the peculiar influence they exercise on their neighbours, have a greater amount of political power than any other body of men in Ireland. They and their nominees serve on every local authority in the country, while the parliamentary party is like putty in their hands. And wherever their influence is exercised, it is expressed in terms of corruption and jobbery. Mr. Seumas O'Kelly has written a play, called "The Bribe," in which he shows that it is impossible to secure the appointment of a dispensary doctor without some show of corruption. The Irish publican, intent on his own enrichment, even if it causes the ruin of his country, seeks to establish in Ireland something of the organisation which his emigrant kinsman has established in Tammany Hall.

The English reader may very well be appalled by the suggestion that corruption and bribery are rampant in Irish affairs, and an unintelligent reader may be inclined to think that the concession of self-government to Ireland is, in these circumstances, a huge mistake. He should remember that the Union was established by bribery and corruption of an unprecedented character, and that all the disregard of social service which the Young Irishmen deplore springs directly from the corruptly-wrought Union. The Young Irishmen do not underestimate the extent of this corruption. They realise that it cannot be checked and destroyed otherwise than by throwing Irishmen on to their own resources and leaving them to work out their own salvation. They do not despair of achieving the downfall of the publican in his character as corrupt gombeen-man, for they have the weapon for his destruction already forged. The co-operative societies will kill the gombeen-men if they are not cramped by the politicians. The gombeen-men recognise the danger to themselves in the I.A.O.S., and they have intrigued continually in order to thwart the efforts of those who control it. The disgraceful episode which culminated in the

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resignation of Sir Horace Plunkett from the Vice-Presidency of the Department of Agriculture is part of the history of the Irish Nationalist Party and is directly attributable to the influence of the publican gombeen-men. The Ulster Unionists who professed to mourn over the resignation of Sir Horace, are, however, as blameworthy as the gombeen-men ; for it was their nasty little Orangemen who secured his dislodgment from his parliamentary seat because of his sympathies with Home Rule, and thus provided the Nationalists with the excuse for demanding his resignation on the ground that a man ought not to occupy a Government position when he is unable to win a seat in the House of Commons. This complaint was not made against Sir Horace Plunkett's successor, Mr. T. W. Russell, although he could not find a seat in Parliament for some time after his appointment to the Vice-Presidency ; but then Mr. Russell, the temperance hotel proprietor, is a friend of the gombeen-man, and the gombeen-man is the master of the Parliamentary Nationalists.

The Young Irishmen will endeavour to extend the work of the I.A.O.S. far beyond its present boundaries. The Society now

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receives a very slender subsidy from the Development Commission. The Young Irishmen will endeavour to obtain a large subsidy for the Society from Irish funds in order (a) to enlarge the scope of the Society, and (b) to make Irishmen interested in a body for which they have to pay a considerable sum. They believe that Irishmen may easily displace Danes as the dairy-farmers of England, but they do not believe that it is possible for this change to be made outside the co-operative movement. Subsidies, by themselves, however, will not enable the I.A.O.S. to develop the agricultural resources of Ireland. It is needful, too, that the means of transport should be developed, and that there should be greater facilities for young men and women to obtain highly skilled technical instruction.

### **6**

It will be necessary to nationalise the Irish railways and canals. The Irish railway system is very nearly the most inefficient in the world. It takes as long to travel from Fair Head in Antrim to Cape Clear in Cork, although the distance is only three hundred miles, as it does to cross the continent of Europe, and if the somnolent gentlemen who direct the railways were left to them-

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selves, it would take almost as long to perform the journey as it takes to cross from one side of the United States to the other. Freight charges are absurdly high, and these, added to the inefficiency and slowness of the service and the fact that every hundred miles of track seems to be owned by a different company, make the development of agriculture and dairy-farming difficult. A Royal Commission on Irish Railways reported in favour of their nationalisation a few years ago, and public opinion is prepared for such a measure.

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But most important of all the reforms that are desired by the Young Irishmen is the reform of the Irish educational system. The instruction given is inadequate—no Irish child attending an elementary school receives any historical education whatever—and it is of a sort that is calculated to produce, at best, a half-baked clerk. The teachers are very badly paid and most of them are untrained. The ratio of teachers who go to the Training College in Dublin is small in comparison with the number who do not go to any Training College. The Young Irishmen wish to see a body of well-paid, highly-trained school teachers in Ireland, and, since

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Ireland is an agricultural country, they wish the teachers to have a wide knowledge of technical agricultural subjects. There are dairy schools in Ireland, but they are few in number and used chiefly by people of some means. The Young Irishmen wish to see technical instruction given generally and freely. They will not be content until the Irish people are as skilful with their hands as they are with their tongues.

There is another reform in education strongly desired by the Young Irishmen which will probably make bitter controversy. They desire to exclude the priest and the minister from the managership of the schools. Each school in Ireland is attached to a church, and the children of a particular faith go to the school of that faith. In Belfast, for example, the Presbyterian children generally receive their education at the Presbyterian schools, the Episcopalian children at the Episcopal schools, the Catholic children at the Catholic schools, and so on. In this way a very undesirable segregation of children is secured, and little boys and girls are made aware of the differences of sect at a time when they ought only to know of hoops and tops. The priest or minister of the particular church is invariably the manager of the school, and he has a power over the headmaster and the teachers which it is not desirable that any

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man, much less a cleric, should possess. In a very notable novel, called "Waiting," by Mr. Donovan, there is a vivid account of the unfortunate manner in which a priest who is manager of a school can spoil an attempt to give children an education of value to them. The reader of this novel must not fall into the error of imagining that it deals with matters exclusively relating to Catholic schools. Masters of Protestant schools in Belfast could parallel in some measure the experience of the master in Mr. Donovan's book. The Young Irishmen, too, wish to dissociate Irish elementary education from all sectarian religious instruction, which means, in Ireland, that elementary school teachers will not be called upon to give any religious instruction at all. The proper persons to give religious instruction are priests and parsons. That is their spiritual function. It is also what they are paid to do. In country places, the clergy must often find time weighing heavy on their hands. The Young Irishmen, by preventing the school teachers from giving religious instruction and thus forcing the clergy to give it, will perform the useful labour of giving the clergy something to do on weekdays. It is desirable that the religious instruction should be given in the churches and not in the schools. The Young Irishmen do not wish the schools to be connected in

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any way with sectarianism. They are as little anxious that a child should learn its letters with the brand of Catholic or Presbyterian, so to speak, on its lesson-books as they are that adults should plant potatoes or build ships in the spirit of sectarians. One miserable result of the segregation of school children into sects is that men cannot work together in the shipyards without periodically battering each other's heads.

### **8**

And what proposals of reform have the Young Irishmen to offer in the industrial areas of Ireland ?

The establishment of a parliament in Dublin will have the effect ultimately of making working-men in Belfast class-conscious instead of sect-conscious ; and we may expect to see a great growth in Trade Unionism in Ireland where, at present, it is weak. The wide extent of the sweating evil in Belfast has now been irrefutably established by a Committee of Enquiry, and no one attempts to deny that the conditions of housing in Dublin are abominable. When the Protestant workman realises that Home Rule does not mean that he will have to attend Mass and make confession and say

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his prayers to the Virgin Mary (which is what he now believes) he will begin to wonder why it is that labourers in Belfast, whether they are Catholic or Protestant, outside the shipyards receive a wage of 14s. to 16s. per week; and we may expect a demand in time for a Minimum Wage. The Young Irishmen will encourage the labourer to make that demand. When men are secured in a living wage in Belfast, it will not be desperately necessary for married women to go into mills and factories in order to earn enough to bring their husbands' wages up to the sum which is necessary to maintain a family even in a semi-starved state. Early in this book, I stated that the rate of pauperism in Belfast is very low, and that Ulster Unionists make a boast of this as a sign of the efficiency and prosperity of their city in comparison with Dublin, where the rate of pauperism is three times as high as it is in Belfast. At one time, indeed, Ulster Unionists made the egregious boast that there was no poverty in Belfast, although every man who uses his eyes and nose can speedily discover that there is. If this boast were well founded, Belfast would be unique among industrial cities, for poverty and slums seem to be inseparable from the modern city. This boast was not maintained for a very long time, but a change was made in its character. The

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second assertion was that if there were any poverty and slums in Belfast they were to be found only in Catholic quarters. In controversy with a very able linen lord, Mr. J. H. Sterling, the managing director of the York Street Flax Spinning and Weaving Company, Limited, the largest concern of its kind in the world, I quoted in the columns of *The New Age* a long list of Belfast streets, almost exclusively occupied by Protestants, which are definitely poor, and in some cases, slum areas. I also quoted statistics from the report of the Medical Officer of Health for Belfast (Dr. Bailie) in which I showed that the percentage of deaths from infectious diseases is higher in Protestant wards than in Catholic wards. I do not know how to account for this fact, nor do I wish the reader to infer that a belief in the infallibility of the Pope will secure a man from the ravages of scarlet fever or pulmonary diseases, nor is it any satisfaction to me to find that this is the state of affairs. I quoted these statistics merely in order to refute misstatements made for contemptible purposes. Dr. Bailie expressly stated in his Report that these infectious diseases and the very high rate of mortality both among adults and among infants were due to poverty, insanitary homes and inadequate nourishment.

The Ulster Unionists, in quoting the rate

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of pauperism in Belfast, omitted to mention that this low rate is obtained by a harsh administration of the Poor Law. They omitted to state that the Board of Guardians in Belfast, in contrast with the Boards of Guardians in the principal Poor Law areas in England and also in Dublin, refuse to grant Outdoor Relief except in a very restricted number of cases. The temporarily distressed person who applies to these Guardians for relief must either enter the General Mixed Workhouse and suffer the disintegration of his home and the peculiar stigma which attaches to an inmate of the Workhouse, or else go without relief. One begins to understand why the rate of pauperism is low in Belfast. One realises too that it is in no way a measure of the amount of poverty in the Ulster capital, because proud workmen, however distressed they may be, will starve outside the Workhouse rather than be relieved inside it. Any Board of Guardians can reduce its rate of pauperism by restricting Outdoor Relief or, as in the case of the Poor Law Authority of Clones, by refusing to grant Outdoor Relief at all ; but no one but a born fool or a party politician believes that by doing this, the Guardians are reducing the amount of poverty. When the Ulster Unionist points out that the rate of pauperism in Dublin is three times as great as it is in Belfast, he

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wishes his auditor to believe that there are three times as many poor people in Dublin as in Belfast. The untruth of this suggestion can be proved by a reference to the Vital Statistics of both cities. *The rate of infantile mortality in both cities is very nearly level* (it is extremely high), although Dublin is an old city, with narrow streets and a poor system of sanitation, whereas Belfast is a modern city, with wide streets and an admirable system of sanitation. The cost of living, too, is very high in Dublin, but it is low in Belfast. Rents are so dear in Dublin that the bulk of the poor people live in tenement buildings, but so cheap in Belfast that there are hardly any tenement buildings, and very few instances of more than one family in a house. If, in spite of these advantages in favour of Belfast, the rate of child mortality is almost level with that of Dublin, it is clear that something is wrong in that city of which the Ulster Unionists have not taken account. My own belief is that the high rate of infant mortality in Belfast is due to the fact that so many married women have to work in the mills and factories.

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**9**

I remember discussing the character of a certain Belfast millowner with a friend of mine who is the manager of an insurance company in that city. I said to him, "Why don't you try to get the insurance of his workpeople under the Workmen's Compensation Act ? It's a big business ! " and he replied that he would not take the business if it were offered to him. When I asked him to tell me why he should refuse it, he said, " The girls are so badly paid and, therefore, so badly nourished, that when they meet with an accident they take about three times as long to recover from it as they would if they were healthy ! " My friend is a Protestant.

**10**

The Young Irishmen have no desire to boost one Irish city at the expense of another, or to exalt one set of Irishmen in order to make little of another set. The Young Irishmen realise that there are as many evils in Dublin as there are in Belfast, and would admit that there are probably more. They see no sense in these comparisons of one town to the disadvantage of

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another. There is an honourable rivalry between cities which the Young Irishmen are eager to promote. They do not desire to hear the citizens of Belfast asserting that Dublin is worse than their city, and using that statement as an excuse for not making Belfast better than it is. If there are to be comparisons at all, the Young Irishmen would prefer that Belfast should compare itself with some city which is superior to it, and then seek to bring itself to the level of that city and if possible beyond it. It is an odd thing about men that they begin to talk very portentously of the reality of life at a time when their chief energies are devoted to the destruction of it. That is how men talk in time of war. The Young Irishmen believe in the reality of life in all times, whether of war or of peace, and all their efforts will be made for the conservation of it. In setting out some of the reforms that they desire to initiate I have omitted many concrete instances of evils that must be eradicated before Ireland can be said to be a healthy nation ; and this omission is due, in part, to the defects of my own mind, in part, to the fact that it is difficult to make a plan of campaign until the forces are marshalled. It is not easy to tell your friend from your foe in Ireland at this moment. The Young Irishmen believe that they have friends in every province in

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Ireland, but the friendships are not yet clear, and some who are likely in the end to be comrades are now threatening each other with death and bitter enmity. The world is full of deadly vapours, and the history of mankind is a long epic of the attempts that men make to dispel them. It sometimes happens that poisoned men behave in a way which makes the task of dispelling these vapours more difficult, but the Force that animates the world will not be overruled forever by little angry men, inflamed by poisons which they mistake for healing potions. There will come great gales out of heaven that will blow the vapours from the valleys and leave the hill-tops clear to every eye. Every act of reconciliation is a gale from God, and when Protestants and Catholics, Orangemen and Ancient Hibernians put their hands together, and the four beautiful fields of Cathleen ni Houlihan become one pasture, there will be no poisonous vapour left in Ireland to obscure the destiny of Irishmen. "Can it be that love, sacred, devoted love, is not all powerful ?" Turgenev demands in "Fathers and Children," and answers his question thus : "Oh, no ! However passionate, sinning and rebellious the heart hidden in the tomb, the flowers growing over it peep serenely at us with their innocent eyes ; they tell us not of eternal peace alone, of that great

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peace of 'indifferent' nature ; they tell us too of eternal reconciliation and of life without end."

### 11

And so, if there is much that is vague and rhetorical in this book ; if there are many omissions of practical things that need to be done ; if I have failed to tell you of the housing schemes that must be initiated, the laws that must be enacted to safeguard workers from the rapacity of employers and of schemes to make the work of Irishmen more commonly known to other men ; if I have failed in these things (and I do not doubt that I have), ascribe these failures not to the futility of the Young Irishmen, but to the defects of my mind and temper. I have tried, less to show you plans than to show you a spirit, and if I have done that, I have fulfilled my task. The future of Ireland is in the hands of the Young Irishmen. The Old Men have had their time, and a poor, twisted thing they have made of the Ireland that they inherited. The Young Irishmen will waste no tears on the Old Irishmen as they shovel them into the grave.

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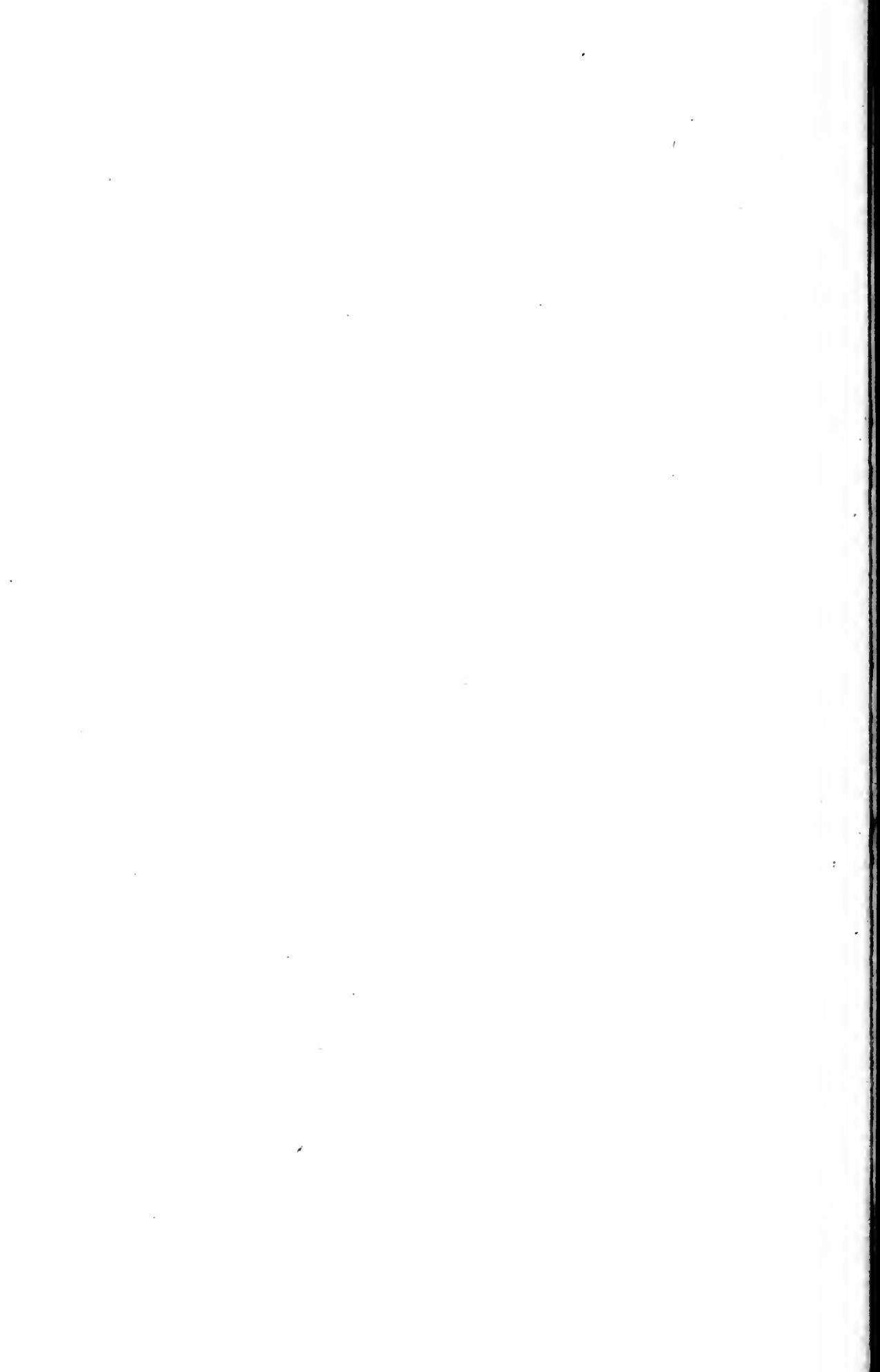
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The reader may feel that a rebuke is due to a writer who devotes one chapter to the subject of the title of his book, and fills the remaining chapters with other matters. So, as a German would say ! I wrote this book for the express purpose of telling my readers that men such as Mr. Redmond and Sir Edward Carson are of very little importance in Ireland. It is not these persons who are moulding the shape of Irish affairs, but other men whose names are hardly known. A hundred years hence, some scribbler will write an article on Forgotten Politicians, and he will mention the names of John Redmond and Edward Carson and such-like, and old gentlemen, wheezing in club-corners, will blink their eyes and try to make their memories coherent. "God bless my soul !" they will say, "there were persons of those names ! I distinctly remember now . . . let me see, what *did* John Redmond *do* ? Who *was* Edward Carson ?" And they will not be able to remember.

And, anyhow, it is not my fault that there is so little to say about Sir Edward Carson. I would have said more if there had been more to say.







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